A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

BOOK OF PSALMS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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BOOK OF PSALMS.

IN WHICH

Their LITERAL or HISTORICAL SENSE, as they relate to KING DAVID, and the PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, is ILLUSTRATED;

And their APPLICATION to MESSIAH, to the CHURCH, and to INDIVIDUALS, as Members thereof, is POINTED OUT:

With a view to render the Uſe of the PSALTER PLEASING and PROFITABLE to all ORDERS and DEGREES of CHRISTIANS.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

Horne

BY GEORGE, LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH,

AND PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

All things muſt be fulfilled, which were written in the Pſalms concerning me. Luke xxiv. 44.

I will ſing with the ſpirit, and I will ſing with the underſtanding alſo. 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

They ſing the ſong of Moſes, and the ſong of the Lamb. Rev. xv. 3.

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A COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

XV DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXV.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet, 1. gives thanks, with the church, to God for the manifeſtation of his NAME, and the wonders of ſalvation wrought thereby. 2. He declares his reſolution of executing judgment and juſtice in his kingdom, which 3. had been in diſorder and confuſion; 4—6. he rebukes the wicked; 6, 7. reminds them of the power, providence, counſels, and judgments of God; 9, 10. he concludes with repeating his reſolution to praiſe God; to break the power of wickedneſs; and to eſtabliſh righteouſneſs.

VER. 1. *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks,* unto thee *do we give thanks: for that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare.*

The church offers up her repeated praiſes to God for deliverance; ſhe acknowledges the preſence of his

NAME in the midſt of her, which had been evidenced by the "wonderful works" wrought for her ſalvation. Upon whatever occaſion theſe words were originally indited, the Chriſtian church now celebrates in them that great deliverance, which, by ſo many miracles of mercy and power, hath been accompliſhed for her, through Meſſiah, who is in Scripture frequently ſtyled, "the NAME of Jehovah." See Iſai. xxx. 27.

2. *When I ſhall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly.*

The firſt verſe was ſpoken by many perſons; "unto thee O God do WE give thanks;" here the ſpeaker is one, and that one is plainly a ruler, who promiſes, that when he ſhall have "received the congregation," or, as ſome render it, "when he ſhall "have gotten an appointed, or fit time, or ſeaſon," that is, when he ſhall be eſtabliſhed in power and authority, at a fit time and place, he will "judge "uprightly," and introduce a thorough reformation into a kingdom, which, as we ſhall find by the following verſe, ſtood greatly in need of it. From theſe circumſtances it ſhould ſeem moſt probable, that David is ſpeaking of his advancement to the throne of Iſrael, and the intended rectitude of his adminiſtration, when he ſhould be ſettled thereon. What David did in Iſrael, was done in the church univerſal, by him who ſate upon the throne of David, when he "received," for his inheritance, the great "congregation" of the Gentiles, and the earth was full of the "righteouſneſs" of Jehovah.

3. *The*

3. *The earth*, or, *the land, and all the inhabitants thereof are*, or, *were diſſolved: I bear up the pillars of it.*

Civil diſtractions, and the continual irruptions of foreign enemies, had thrown the Iſraelitiſh affairs into confuſion, and "diſſolved" the frame of government; until, by the re-eſtabliſhment of royal authority, countenance and ſupport were again given to all the ſubordinate magiſtrates; who are, in their reſpective ſtations, the "pillars" of a community. Such was the univerſal corruption and diſſolution of manners both among Jews and Gentiles, when Meſſias, entering upon his regal office, reformed the world, raiſed the glorious fabric of the church, and made his apoſtles and their ſucceſſors the "pillars" of his ſpiritual kingdom. Let men ſupport religion; and God will ſupport them.

4. *I ſaid unto the fools, deal not fooliſhly; and to the wicked, lift not up the horn:* 5. *Lift not up your horn on high; ſpeak not with a ſtiff neck.*

"Where the word of a king is, there is power." The prophet addreſſes himſelf to the oppoſers of his government, and the diſturbers of Iſrael: he urges the "folly" of exalting themſelves againſt their prince; and exhorts them, for their own ſakes, to humility and obedience. Is not this the very meſſage which the miniſters of Chriſt have received from their king, and are commanded to deliver to the world?

6. *For promotion* cometh *neither from the eaſt, nor*

from the weſt, nor from the ſouth: 7. But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another.

The oppoſition, mentioned in the preceding verſe, was called "folly." In theſe verſes it is proved to be ſuch; as being an oppoſition, in effect, to the counſels of heaven; for, not by worldly power or craft, but by the deſignation and providence of God himſelf, the ſupreme judge of princes, and diſpoſer of kingdoms, was the houſe of Saul "put down," and the houſe of David "ſet up." And are not, then, the enemies of the Son of God in arms againſt the Father; who, according to the promiſes going before concerning him, hath highly exalted him; hath committed all power and judgment to him; and hath put all things under his feet? Yea, and the hour is coming, when he ſhall put down all rule, and all authority, and power, and the Lord Jeſus alone ſhall be exalted in that day. What will then be the portion of his impenitent adverſaries, the next verſe will inform us.

8. *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the ſame; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth ſhall wring them out, and drink them.*

As the choiceſt of heavenly bleſſings are frequently in Scripture repreſented by the ſalutary effects of wine, a cup of which the Maſter of the family is ſuppoſed to hold in his hand, ready to diſtribute due portions of it to thoſe around him; ſo from the noxious and intoxicating qualities of that liquor, when drank ſtrong, and in too large a quantity, is bor-

borrowed a moſt tremendous image of the wrath and indignation of Almighty God. Calamity and ſorrow, fear and trembling, infatuation and deſpair, the evils of the preſent life, and of that which is to come, are the bitter ingredients which compoſe this moſt horrible cup of mixture. It is entirely in the hand and diſpoſal of God, who, through every age, has been pouring out, and adminiſtring of it's contents, more or leſs, in proportion to the ſins of men. But much of the ſtrength and power of the liquor ſtill remains behind, until the day of final vengeance. It will be then exhauſted, even to the dregs, by unrepenting rebels; when "burning coals, fire, and brimſtone," and eternal "tempeſt," ſhall be "the portion of their "cup." Pſ. xi. 6.

9. *But I will declare for ever; I will ſing praiſes to the God of Jacob.*

Theſe diſpenſations of mercy and judgment the prophet reſolves to "declare" to the world for ever, by thus "ſinging" the works and the "praiſes" of God, in Pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs. And while we now ſing them, we declare our reſolution to be the ſame with his.

10. *All the horns of the wicked alſo will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous ſhall be exalted.*

He determines likewiſe, as every good governor ſhould do, to exert the authority with which he was entruſted; to break the power of triumphant wickedneſs; and to exalt that righteouſneſs which exalteth a nation; hereby rendering himſelf a fit image of Him, who hath ſince done away tranſgreſſion, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs, who will one

day turn the wicked into hell, and exalt his faithful ſervants, to reign with him in heaven. Already he reigns in them upon earth: cauſing "all carnal af-"fections to die in them, and all things belonging "to the Spirit to live and grow in them."

PSALM LXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

It is obvious, at firſt ſight, to any one who reads this Pſalm, that it was compoſed, as a thankſgiving hymn, on account of ſome great deliverance, wrought for his people, by the immediate hand of God. The miraculous deſtruction of the Aſſyrian army, by the angel, in the days of king Hezekiah, is generally pitched upon, as the ſubject of it, and affirmed to be ſo by the ancient Greek inſcription* prefixed to it in the LXX verſion. The prophet, 1, 2. declares the glory which God hath gotten him in Iſrael; 3—6. deſcribes the circumſtances of the deliverance, with 7. a reflection thereupon; 8—10. he mentions the effects it had produced among the nations, and 11, 12, thoſe which it ought to produce in Iſraelitiſh hearts. The ideas are to be tranſferred to the ſalvation of the church univerſal, by the deſtruction of ſin and Satan, and the overthrow of the perſecuting powers.

* ὠδὴ πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσύριον

1. *In*

1. *In Judah is God known, his Name is great in Iſrael.* 2. *In Salem alſo is his tabernacle, and his dwelling in Sion.*

On occaſion of ſome great deliverance, the prophet ſpeaks in tranſport concerning that preſence and protection of God, which the highly favoured Judah once enjoyed. She enjoyed them while ſhe continued faithful, and really was, what ſhe profeſſed to be. But on account of her infidelity, and rejection of her Meſſiah, an alteration of circumſtances has taken place. They are no longer Jews, who are ſuch outwardly, nor is that circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh; but they are Jews, who believe in the Son of God; and they are of the circumciſion, who are cleanſed by him from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit. The Gentile Chriſtian church hath ſucceeded to the privileges of the Iſraelitiſh. In her now "God "is known" by the Goſpel; and "his Name is "great" in her, by reaſon of all the mighty wonders which he hath wrought for her; ſhe is the true "Sa-"lem," or city of peace; ſhe is the true "Sion," the ſpiritual, holy, and beloved hill; and in her is the "tabernacle" and "dwelling place" of God her Saviour, by the Spirit.

3. *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the ſhield, the ſword, and the battle.*

When God appeared in the defence of his ancient people, the weapons of their enemies were at once blunted and broken, and all the formidable apparatus of war became, in a moment, utterly uſeleſs. Such was the event, when the holy Jeſus entered the

liſts againſt our ſpiritual adverſaries, "for" us; and ſuch ever will be the event, when he engages them "in" us.

4. *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*

This may be a beautiful apoſtrophe to mount Sion, (mentioned, ver. 2.) as appearing infinitely more glorious and excellent, through the favour and protection of her God, than the arm of fleſh and the inſtruments of war could render the kingdoms of the earth, which ſet themſelves againſt her; and which, for their tyranny, and cruelty, and the ravages committed by them, are likened to thoſe mountains, where beaſts of prey, with ſimilar diſpoſitions, rove, and roar, and devour. The powers of the world "make war with the Lamb, whoſe ſtation is upon "mount Sion;" but "the Lamb ſhall overcome "them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; "and they that are with him are called, and choſen, "and faithful." Rev. xiv. 1. xvii. 14.

5. *The ſtout hearted are ſpoiled, they have ſlept their ſleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.* 6. *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot*, or, *rider, and horſe, are caſt into a dead ſleep.*

It muſt be acknowledged, that theſe two verſes ſeem in a very particular manner to point at the miraculous deſtruction of Senacherib's army, when the "ſtout hearted," who doubted not of taking and ſpoiling the holy city, were themſelves ſuddenly "ſpoiled" of ſtrength and life; they "ſlept their "ſleep, and found not their hands;" they awaked not

not again to the uſe of their powers and faculties; a rebuking blaſt was ſent from the God of Jacob, under which the flower of Aſſyria withered in the ſpace of a night, and in the morning was no more; "the horſe and his rider were caſt into a dead "ſleep;" they ſlept the ſleep of death. How, in a moment, were the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war periſhed! How aſtoniſhing the downfal of the tyrant! How compleat the triumph of the daughter of Sion! Such will be the deſtruction of the world; ſuch the ſalvation of the people of God.

7. *Thou*, even *thou* art *to be feared, and who may ſtand in thy ſight, when once thou art angry?*

Why are the miraculous exertions of omnipotence recorded in the book of life, but to ſuggeſt to us this reflection, that God, and God only, is the proper object of our fear: ſince neither the wiſdom of the wiſe, nor the power of the mighty, no, not the world itſelf, can ſtand a ſingle moment before him, "when once he is angry." Yet we continue to dread any frowns but thoſe of heaven; and one poor, vain, ſinful man ſhall, through a courſe of ſixty, or ſeventy years, inceſſantly and undauntedly tempt and provoke Him, who deſtroyed 185000 in a night. What is this, but madneſs?

8. *Thou didſt cauſe judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was ſtill*; 9. *When God aroſe to judgment, to ſave all the meek of the earth*, or, *the afflicted of the land.*

A deſtruction ſo far exceeding human power, was evidently the ſentence of God's judgment, audibly pronounced from the eternal throne; and it was heard

heard by all the earth with an awful ſilence, as when he ſpeaks to attentive nature in thunder. Such was the effect which this interpoſition in behalf of his people produced among the ſurviving Aſſyrians, and the neighbouring nations. Let us carry our thoughts on to the ſenſations which will be felt in the hearts of men, at that hour, when the laſt trump ſhall ſound in the heavens, and the earth ſhall ſhake from her foundations; when God ſhall ariſe to execute judgment on the adverſaries of his church; and to ſave, with an everlaſting ſalvation, all the meek and afflicted of the earth.

10. *Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee: the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.*

The wrath of man, and of Satan himſelf, againſt the church, turns, in the end, to the praiſe and glory of God, who repreſſes it, when at it's height; and at all times appoints thoſe bounds which it cannot paſs, any more than the raging waves of the ocean can overflow their appointed barrier of ſand.

11. *Vow and pay unto the* LORD *your God; let all that are round about him bring preſents unto him that ought to be feared.* 12. *He ſhall cut off*, or, *reſtrain the ſpirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.*

If ſuch ſhould have been the gratitude and devotion of Iſraelites, for a temporary deliverance from the fury of an earthly tyrant; how much higher ought that of Chriſtians to riſe, for eternal redemption from the great oppreſſor? How ought they to "vow and pay their vows unto the LORD their "God; to bring preſents," to offer all they have,

and

and all they are, to him who is ſo greatly to be "feared," ſo highly to be loved; to him who "reſtrains" the fury of evil angels, as well as "the "ſpirit of princes;" and is "terrible" to the powers of darkneſs, no leſs than to "the kings of the "earth!"

PSALM LXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

As the foregoing Pſalm was evidently compoſed, when the church had obtained deliverance from her enemies, this ſeems no leſs plainly to have been written at a time when ſhe was in captivity under them. It contains 1—4. a complaint of ſufferings; and 5—20. a deſcription at large of the ſtruggle between diſtruſt and faith; which latter prevails, by having recourſe to the conſideration of ancient mercies; particularly, that of redemption from Egypt. The Pſalm is admirably calculated for the uſe and conſolation of any church, or ſoul, when in affliction and diſtreſs.

1. *I cried unto God with my voice*; even *unto God with my voice, and he gave ear unto me.*

Uneaſineſs in the heart will utter itſelf by the "voice;" and when the pain is intenſe, the "cry" will be loud. Only let it take a right direction, and aſcend

aſcend to heaven; let the application be made to "God," who will both "hear," and help; not to the world, which will not do one, and cannot do the other. The cries of the Son of God alone were heard for his own ſake; the cries of all other men are heard for his ſake.

2. *In the day of my trouble I ſought the Lord; my ſore ran in the night, and ceaſed not*; Heb. *my hand was ſtretched out in the night, and ceaſed not*, or, *without intermiſſion; my ſoul refuſed to be comforted.*

To a ſoul deeply ſenſible of the world's vanity, and the miſery of ſin, every day is a "day of trou-"ble," and the whole time of her pilgrimage is a long, dark, and weariſome "night," during which ſhe ſeeks after her beloved by prayer; and for the ſake of him, and thoſe future joys which ſhe expects in his preſence, the pleaſures of ſenſe are put away from her, and ſhe "refuſes to be comforted" by ſuch comforters. An Iſraelite cannot enjoy himſelf in Babylon; a Chriſtian cannot find perfect ſatisfaction in the world; a return to Jeruſalem will employ the thoughts of both.

3. *I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my ſpirit was overwhelmed.* Or, *I remembered God, and made a noiſe*, i. e. in prayer to him; *I meditated, and my ſpirit was obſcured, or darkened*, through grief and affliction.

This is a fine deſcription of what paſſes in an afflicted and dejected mind. Between the remembrance of God and his former mercies, and the meditation on a ſeeming deſertion under preſent calamities, the affections are variouſly agitated, and the prayers diſturbed,

turbed, like the tumultuous waves of a troubled ſea; while the fair light from above is intercepted, and the face of heaven overwhelmed with clouds and darkneſs.

4. *Thou holdeſt mine eyes waking: I am ſo troubled that I cannot ſpeak.*

Through grief and anxiety it is, that the eyes are made to keep all the watches of the night, and wait in vain for ſleep to relieve them from duty, until the dawning of the morning. To a night ſo ſpent, may a ſeaſon of captivity, or perſecution, be compared. Thus the ancient church looked for the firſt advent of Chriſt; and thus doth the church, which now is, expect his ſecond; prolonging her vigils, even unto the dawning of that morning, which is at once to put a period to darkneſs and to ſorrow. In the mean time, ſhe giveth herſelf to meditation and prayer.

5. *I have conſidered the days of old, the years of ancient times:* 6. *I call to remembrance my ſong in the night, I commune with mine own heart, and my ſpirit maketh diligent ſearch.*

Recollection of former mercies is the proper antidote againſt a temptation to deſpair, in the day of calamity: and as, in the divine diſpenſations, which are always uniform and like themſelves, whatever has happened, happens again, when the circumſtances are ſimilar; the experience of "ancient times" is to be called in to our aid, and duly conſulted. Nay, we may perhaps "remember" the time, when we ourſelves were led to compoſe and utter a "ſong" of joy and triumph, on occaſion of ſignal mercies vouchſafed

vouchſafed us. Upon theſe topics we ſhould, "in "the night of affliction, commune with our own "hearts, and make diligent ſearch," as Daniel did in Babylon, into the cauſe, the nature, and the probable continuance of our troubles; with the proper methods of ſhortening, and bringing them to an end; by ſuffering them to have their intended and full effect, in a ſincere repentance, and thorough reformation.

7. *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?* 8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?*

The Pſalmiſt now relates the proceſs of his meditations, and of that controverſy which aroſe in his heart between faith and diſtruſt. While he viewed the diſtreſsful ſcene around him, he found himſelf ſtrongly tempted to queſtion God's love of the church; to think that he had finally rejected his people; that the promiſed mercy of redemption would never be accompliſhed; and that indignation had conſtrained the bowels of our heavenly Father, which no longer yearned towards his afflicted children. Theſe were the thoughts ſuggeſted to a deſponding ſoul by the deſolations of Sion at that time; and the ſtate of things in the world may poſſibly be ſuch, as to ſuggeſt the like thoughts to many in the Chriſtian church, before our Lord ſhall appear again, for her final redemption. Imaginations of the ſame caſt will offer themſelves to the mind of the ſinner, when the hand of God has lain long and heavy upon him,

him, by the infliction of outward calamities, or the terrors of conſcience.

10. *And I ſaid, this* is *my infirmity*: but I will remember *the years*, or, *changes of the right hand of the moſt High.*

To the inſinuations of diſtruſt, faith now begins to reply. The ſufferer checks himſelf in his former train of thought, and humbly acknowledges it to have ſprung from a mind diſpirited, and rendered timid, by misfortunes; "I ſaid, this is my infirmi-"ty;" but he immediately ſtrengthens himſelf by reflecting, that all "changes" in the conditions of men are effected, for reaſons of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, by "the right hand of the moſt High;" which is not ſhortened, but can ſtill, as formerly, when he ſees fit, deliver and exalt, as well as puniſh and depreſs his people. What, therefore, though the daughter of Sion be in captivity, and her enemies inſult over her? Meſſias cometh, who ſhall redeem her, and all nations; and then ſhall "the right "hand of the moſt High" work an univerſal and a glorious "change" upon the earth.

11. *I will remember the works of the Lord: ſurely I will remember thy wonders of old.* 12. *I will meditate alſo of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.*

Thus reſtored to a right frame of mind, the Pſalmiſt, inſtead of brooding any longer over the calamities of his own time, reſolves to turn his thoughts towards the divine diſpenſations of old; to meditate on God's former works and wonders; his works of juſtice and mercy, of power and wiſdom, of nature and grace; and, by gratefully celebrating them,

them, to invigorate his faith in the ſalvation to come, of which they were ſo many earneſts and pledges. And it is this conſideration, which makes the euchariſtic Pſalms ever pleaſing, and ever comfortable to the mind; they are appeals to thoſe attributes which have been ſo often diſplayed, in the cauſe of the church; they are acts of faith, looking backward to the paſt, and forward to the future; they are praiſes, and they are prayers.

13. *Thy way, O God,* is *in the ſanctuary,* or, *in holineſs; who* is ſo *great a God as* our *God?*

Faith, now reinſtated in it's ſovereignty over the prejudices and fears of the ſoul, and again placed upon the judgment ſeat, pronounces the "ways" or proceedings of God to be ſuch, as, when weighed in the balance of the "ſanctuary," and judged of by the divine rule and manner of acting, will be found agreeable to the ſtandard of perfect "holineſs." An aſſurance is likewiſe expreſſed, that the power of God, however it may, for a time, lie dormant, yet ſtill retains the ſame ſuperiority, of which former exertions ſhew it to have been poſſeſſed, over the gods of the nations, the elements of nature, and the powers of the world: inſomuch that nothing, which was ever called by others, or called itſelf "God," was able to ſtand before Jehovah, the God of Iſrael; "Who is ſo great a God as our God?" Thus, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in "earth," ſaith our bleſſed Lord, Matt. xxviii. 18. for the everlaſting conſolation of the Chriſtian church.

14. *Thou* art *the God that doeſt wonders; thou haſt declared*

declared thy ſtrength among the people. 15. *Thou haſt with* thine *arm redeemed thy people, the ſons of Jacob and Joſeph.*

Iſrael, in times of trouble and diſtreſs, was wont to look back to the "wonders" wrought in Egypt, and the redemption of all her tribes from that houſe of bondage. We Chriſtians are taught, while we uſe the ſame words, to regard parallel, but more important tranſactions; we reflect on the "wonders" wrought for the bodies and ſouls of men, by the "ſtrength and the arm of Jehovah," revealed and manifeſted to the world in Chriſt; and we celebrate the redemption, not of "the ſons of Jacob and Joſeph" only, but of all nations, from the bondage of corruption; a redemption compared with which, the deliverance from Egypt, though glorious in itſelf, hath yet no glory at all, by reaſon of the glory that ſo far excelleth. Our confidence in God, during the ſeaſons of affliction, ſhould therefore riſe in proportion.

16. *The waters ſaw thee, O God, the waters ſaw thee; they were afraid: the depths alſo were troubled.*

The waters of the red ſea are here beautifully repreſented as endued with ſenſibility, as ſeeing, feeling, and being confounded, even to the loweſt depths, at the preſence and power of their great Creator, when he commanded them to open a way, and to form a wall on each ſide of it, until his people were paſſed over; until his people were paſſed over, whom he had redeemed. In this amazing tranſaction let us behold, as in a glaſs, the ſalvation of believers by baptiſm, through the death and reſurrection of Jeſus

Chriſt, who made the depths of the grave, as he had done thoſe of the ſea, a way for his ranſomed to paſs over; and the church, like another Iſrael, ſaw her enemies, in effect, dead at her feet.

17. *The clouds poured out water, the ſkies ſent out a ſound; thine arrows alſo went abroad.* 18. *The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world, the earth trembled and ſhook.*

It is ſaid, Exod. xiv. 24. that at the time when Iſrael was paſſing the ſea, "the Lord looked upon "the hoſt of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire "and the cloud, and troubled the hoſt of the Egyp- "tians, and took off their chariot wheels, and made "them to go heavily; ſo that the Egyptians ſaid, let "us flee from the face of Iſrael; for the Lord fight- "eth for them againſt the Egyptians." The verſes of our Pſalm now before us, ſeem to explain more particularly the manner in which the Lord "look- "ed upon, and troubled, and fought againſt the "Egyptians," upon that occaſion; namely, by thunders and lightnings, ſtorms and tempeſts, rain, hail, and earthquake, the uſual tokens and inſtruments of Almighty diſpleaſure. Joſephus, in like manner, relates, that the deſtruction of the Egyptians was accompanied by ſtorms of rain from heaven; by dreadful thunders and lightnings; and, in ſhort, by every poſſible circumſtance of terror, which could teſtify and inflict upon man the vengeance of an incenſed God. From ſcenes, like theſe, we learn to form an idea of that power, which diſcomfited the infernal hoſt; raiſed Chriſt from the dead; vanquiſhed oppoſition and perſecution; ſubdued the

world

world to the obedience of faith; ſupports and protects the church; will overthrow antichriſt; raiſe the dead; caſt the wicked, with death and Satan, into the lake of fire; and exalt the righteous, to ſing, with angels in heaven, "the ſong of Moſes and of "the Lamb." See Rev. xv. 3.

19. *Thy way is in the ſea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footſteps are not known.*

The diſpenſations and ways of God, like the paſſage through the red ſea, are all full of mercy to his people; but they are alſo, like that, often unuſual, marvellous, inſcrutable; and we can no more trace his footſteps, than we could have done thoſe of Iſrael, after the waters had returned to their place again. Let us reſolve, therefore, to truſt in him at all times; and let us think we hear Moſes ſaying to us, as he did to the Iſraelites, when ſeemingly reduced to the laſt extremity; "Fear ye not, ſtand ſtill, and "ſee the ſalvation of Jehovah." Exod. xiv. 13.

20. *Thou leddeſt thy people, like a flock, by the hand of Moſes and Aaron.*

The loving kindneſs of God towards Iſrael did not ſtop at the red ſea, but he conducted his choſen flock, by the guidance of faithful paſtors, through all the perils of the wilderneſs, to the land of promiſe. We likewiſe, through thy mercy, O bleſſed Lord Jeſu, have paſſed the red ſea at our baptiſm; and are now journeying in the wilderneſs. Give us thoſe meek, and lowly, and tractable diſpoſitions, which become the ſheep of thy paſture; ſet over us ſkilful and vigilant ſhepherds; and be thou ever both with them and with us; until, having ſurmounted all difficul-

ties and dangers, led by thy grace, and ſupported by thy providence, we all come, in perfect ſafety, to the land of everlaſting reſt; there to live with thee, one fold under one ſhepherd, world without end.

XV DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm containeth a declaration of God's dealings with his people, and of their behaviour to him, in Egypt, in the wilderneſs, and after their ſettlement in Canaan, to the days of David. It is written for the uſe and admonition of Chriſtians; who may here view, as in a glaſs, the mercies they have received, and the returns, which, alas, they have but too often made for them.

1. *Give ear, O my people,* to *my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*

In this verſe, the Pſalmiſt opens his commiſſion, and ſpeaks, as one having authority from above to inſtruct the world. He demands a large and attentive audience, while, by a ſeries of examples, he ſets forth the goodneſs of God, and the ingratitude of man, for the admonition of ſucceeding ages, to the end of time. St. Paul, ſpeaking of the very tranſactions related in our Pſalm, ſaith of them, "Now

"all

"all theſe things happened unto them for en-
"ſamples, Gr. τυποι, types; and they are written for
"our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world
"are come," 1 Cor. x. 11. We Chriſtians, therefore, muſt conſider ourſelves as the "people" who are to "give ear to the law," or "doctrine," inculcated by the following epitome of the Iſraelitiſh hiſtory; WE muſt "incline our ears to the words of" the prophet's "mouth."

2. *I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark ſayings of old.* 3. *Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.*

The Pſalm, being in itſelf a plain narrative of facts, can contain nothing parabolical or ænigmatical in it, unleſs thoſe facts were, what St. Paul affirms them to have been, "enſamples," types, or repreſentations of other facts, relative to the Chriſtian church. As facts, they were "heard and known," and handed down from father to ſon; but with reſpect to the inſtructions and admonitions comprehended in them, and to be extracted by an application to parallel times and circumſtances, they had the nature of a "parable," requiring wiſdom and attention, ſo to underſtand and apply them. It is obſervable, that our Lord is, by St. Matthew, ſaid to have ſpoken to the multitude altogether in parables, "that
"it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the pro-
"phet, ſaying, I will open my mouth in parables, &c."
citing the ſecond verſe of the Pſalm now before us. Matt. xiii. 35. If it doth not follow, from this citation, that the prophet actually ſpeaks the Pſalm in the perſon of Chriſt, yet thus much at leaſt is evi-

dent from it, that the hiſtory of old Iſrael ſomewhat reſembles the letter of the Goſpel parables, and contains, ſhadowed out under it, the hiſtory of a correſpondent ſtate of things in the new Iſrael, or church Chriſtian.* And although the Pſalm, like a large and capacious palace, be laid out into a multitude of different apartments; yet, perhaps, we may find, that the Scriptures of the New Teſtament will furniſh us with a key, which will gain us admiſſion into every one of them, and put us in poſſeſſion of the treaſures of divine wiſdom therein depoſited.

4. *We will not hide them from their children, ſhewing to the generation to come,* Heb. *the latter generation, the praiſes of the* LORD, *and his ſtrength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*

The writer of this Pſalm is deſirous that "the "praiſes of Jehovah, his ſtrength, and the wonder-"ful works that he hath done," an account of which had reached his own time, ſhould be tranſmitted, through all the periods of the Jewiſh oeconomy, down to the דור אחרון the "latter generation," or generation to ariſe in the "latter days;" the generation of the faithful, to be begotten unto God, from among the Gentiles, through the Goſpel. Of this generation are we, who now, in theſe words of the holy Pſalmiſt, do from age to age "ſhew the praiſes "of the Lord," our Saviour, "and his ſtrength, and "his wondrous works that he hath done" for us, as he promiſed and foreſhewed, in his diſpenſations of

* "In parabolis"—Aliud dicit; aliud innuit: ac præteritorum ſpecie futura præſagit. Id quoque ex perſonâ Chriſti. Matt. xiii. 35. BOSSUET.

old

old time. The glorious theme was delivered by the Iſraelitiſh to the Chriſtian church, and will be reſumed in heaven, there for ever to employ the tongues of ſaints, and the harps of angels.

5. *For he eſtabliſhed a teſtimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Iſrael, which he commanded our fathers that they ſhould make them known to their children:* 6. *That the generation to come,* or, *latter generation might know them, even the children which ſhould be born: who ſhould ariſe, and declare them to their children.*

The account of God's dealings with his people, to be celebrated in our Pſalm, begins with the "law," or "teſtimony, appointed and eſtabliſhed in Iſrael," by the hand of Moſes. Under theſe names are comprehended, not only the precepts and ceremonies, but the ſeveral tranſactions to which they referred, and in commemoration of which they were inſtituted; as alſo that future ſalvation, to which they, as well as the tranſactions, had an aſpect. Thus the paſſover, for inſtance, looked backward to the redemption by Moſes, and forward to that by Meſſiah. The law thus conſidered, as involving the Goſpel within it, was, to underſtanding and pious Iſraelites, the fountain of wiſdom, and ſource of delight. They were to meditate therein day and night, and teach their children to do likewiſe; until, with it's types realized, and it's prophecies accompliſhed in the Redeemer, it ſhould go forth out of Sion in perfect beauty, and run and be glorified among the nations. The "law" and the "teſtimony" are now become ours; and it is our duty to tranſmit them down to

lateſt poſterity, until Jeſus ſhall return to judgment.

7. *That they might ſet their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;* 8. *And might not be as their fathers, a ſtubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that ſet not their heart aright, and whoſe ſpirit was not ſtedfaſt with God.*

The reaſon is here aſſigned, why God gave Iſrael a law, and commanded that fathers ſhould teach it to their children, and their children's children; and the ſame reaſon holds with regard to the Goſpel; namely, that the choſen people, renouncing the world, with it's idols and luſts, ſhould believe and "ſet their hope in" the true "God," the only Saviour; that they ſhould "not forget the works" which he hath wrought for their redemption; and that ever mindful of thoſe works, they ſhould love him, and "keep his commandments;" not following the examples of the fathers of Iſrael, who proved "faithleſs," and "rebellious" in the wilderneſs, when God hath brought them out of Egypt. This is the very uſe St. Paul makes of thoſe examples. "With "ſome of them," ſays he, "God was not well pleaſed, "for they were overthrown in the wilderneſs. Now "theſe things were our examples," τυποι ημων, "to the "intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, or be "idolaters, or commit fornication, &c. &c. as did "ſome of them. 1 Cor. x. 5.

9. *The children of Ephraim,* being *armed,* and *carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.*

As the context treats concerning the behaviour of Iſrael in general, upon their coming out of Egypt; and

and as the cowardice of the tribe of Ephraim in particular, at that time, is no where mentioned; it is therefore moſt probable, that one tribe is here put for all the reſt; and that under the figure of men, when prepared for battle, turning their backs at ſight of an enemy, is pointed out that diſpoſition of the Iſraelites, after all their promiſes, reſolutions, and vows of ſerving and obeying God, to fall away, and relapſe into ſin, upon the firſt temptation. How often is this the caſe with the Chriſtian ſoldier? Let not him, who hath but juſt put on his ſpiritual armour, boaſt, like him who is putting it off, when the fight is over, and the victory obtained.

10. *They kept not the covenant of God, and refuſed to walk in his law.* 11. *And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had ſhewed them.* 12. *Marvellous things did he in the ſight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.*

Theſe verſes, it is apprehended, deſcribe in plain terms, what was metaphorically expreſſed in the verſe preceding, namely, the proneneſs of the Iſraelites to break the "covenant," tranſgreſs the "law," and forget the "works" of God, even thoſe aſtoniſhing works wrought in "Egypt," and in "Zoan," it's capital city. Let the Chriſtian, who perhaps is amazed at the frequent rebellions of ſtiff-necked Iſrael, reflect a little within himſelf, how he has obſerved the baptiſmal "covenant:" how he has "walked "ed in the law," and with what gratitude he has remembered the "marvellous works" of Jeſus.

13. *He divided the ſea, and cauſed them to paſs through, and he made the waters to ſtand as an heap.*

From

From the miracles wrought in Egypt, the Pſalmiſt proceeds to what happened at the Exodus. And here, he fails not to mention that great work of Almighty power, the diviſion of the red ſea, which was ever uppermoſt in the thoughts of a devout Iſraelite; as the paſſage of the church, in Chriſt her Saviour, through the grave and gate of death, ought never to depart from the memory of a Chriſtian.

14. *In the day time alſo he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light fire.*

During the forty years pilgrimage of Iſrael in the wilderneſs, a preternatural column of fire and cloud attended the camp. It reſted with them, and moved on before them, directing and conducting them in their journeys; in the night ſeaſon it was a bright and ſhining light; and in the day time it afforded a grateful cooling ſhade from the burning heat of thoſe ſultry deſerts. Thus is Chriſt preſent with his church, while ſhe ſojourns upon earth, by his Word and his Spirit, guiding her ſteps, enlightening her darkneſs, and mitigating her ſorrows.

15. *He clave the rocks in the wilderneſs, and gave* them *drink as out of the great depths.* 16. *He brought ſtreams alſo out of the rock, and cauſed waters to run down like rivers.*

Let us, ſaith Biſhop Taylor, by the aids of memory and fancy, conſider the children of Iſrael in the wilderneſs, in a barren and dry land where no water was, marching in duſt and fire, not wet with the dew of heaven, but wholly without moiſture, ſave only what dropt from their own brows. The air was fire, and the vermin was fire; the flying

ſerpents

ſerpents were of the ſame kindred with the firmament; their ſting was a flame, their venom was a fever, and the fever a calenture; and the whole ſtate of the Iſraelites abode and travel was a little image of the day of judgment, when the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat. Theſe men, like ſalamanders walking in fire, dry with heat, ſcorched with thirſt, and made yet more thirſty by calling upon God for water; ſuppoſe, I ſay, theſe thirſty ſouls, hearing Moſes promiſe that he will ſmite the rock, and that a river ſhould break forth from thence; obſerve how preſently they run to the foot of the ſpringing ſtone, thruſting forth their heads and tongues to meet the water, impatient of delay, crying out that the water did not move, like light, all at once: and then ſuppoſe the pleaſure of their drink, the inſatiableneſs of their deſire, the immenſity of their appetite: they took in as much as they could, and they deſired much more. This was their Sacrament, and this was their manner of receiving it. And if that water was a type of our Sacrament, or a Sacrament of the ſame ſecret bleſſing, then is their thirſt a ſignification of our duty.*

17. *And they ſinned yet more againſt him, by provoking the moſt High in the wilderneſs.* 18. *And they tempted God in their hearts, by aſking meat for their luſt.* 19. *Yea they ſpake againſt God: they ſaid, can God furniſh a table in the wilderneſs?* 20. *Behold, he ſmote the rock, that the waters guſhed out, and the ſtreams overflowed, can he give bread alſo, or provide fleſh for his people?*

* Worthy Communicant, p. 92.

Theſe

These frequent rebellions of Israel, with the presence of God in the midst of them, and his miracles before their eyes, would seem incredible, had they been related any where but in the oracles of truth; and did not the heart of every self-knowing Christian at once acknowledge the picture which is here drawn of human nature, it's incredulity and perverseness. For hath not God delivered us from the house of bondage, and supported us in the wilderness: is not Jesus present in the church, and are not his miracles of love and mercy continually before our eyes, in the Word and in the Sacrament? Yet, who does not still "provoke" and "tempt the most High:" who does not ask provision for his "lust," when his necessities are satisfied: and who, after all the proofs he has had of God's power and goodness, is not apt, upon every appearance of danger, to be difficult, and distrustful of his providence? Before we condemn others, let us try ourselves, and judge righteous judgment. When David pronounced the words, "The man that hath done this thing shall surely "die," little did he think of being told, by his faithful monitor, "Thou art the man." Conscience, if duly interrogated, will be a Nathan to every one, and shew him his own transgressions, in those of old Israel.

21. *Therefore the* LORD *heard* this, *and was wroth; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel*; 22. *Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:* 23. *Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,* 24. *And had rained down Manna upon them*

them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. 25. *Man did eat angels food: he ſent them meat to the full.*

The diſcontents, mentioned above, in verſe 17, &c. were poſterior not only to the miracle at the rock, but alſo to the gift of "manna," which, after ſome little time, the people "loathed," and demanded "fleſh," repenting that they had forſaken Egypt, where they fared more to their ſatisfaction. See Numb. xi. The cauſe of the diſcontents was infidelity, and the effect of them a diſplay of God's indignation; "The Lord was wroth—becauſe they be-"lieved not, &c." Now, as St. Paul ſtyles the water, "ſpiritual," or, "ſacramental drink," proceeding a "ſpiritual rock, which rock was Chriſt;" ſo he terms the manna, "ſpiritual," or "ſacramental "meat; they did all eat of that ſame ſpiritual meat." 1 Cor. x. 3. And our Lord, in John vi. diſcourſes at large upon the ſubject, to convince the Jews, that God, who gave to their fathers manna in the wilderneſs, had in HIM given them "the true bread" of eternal life, which the manna was intended to repreſent. "I am the living bread which came down "from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he ſhall "live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my "fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world." Chriſt crucified is the ſupport of ſpiritual and eternal life; faith is the mouth by which this ſupport is received; manna was an outward and viſible ſign of it to the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs; the euchariſtic bread is ſuch to Chriſtians in the world. When that holy ordinance is celebrated, "the doors of heaven

"are

"are opened," ſpiritual food is given from above, "and man eats לחם אבירים the bread of the mighty "ones;" whether by "mighty ones" we underſtand thoſe who eat the bread, and are invigorated thereby; or the bleſſed perſons who give the bread to man. Such is our manna, our ſuſtenance in the wilderneſs, our viaticum, while on the road to Canaan. But how is it "loathed," and deſpiſed, in compariſon with "the fleſh pots of Egypt," by men who "be-"lieve not in God, and truſt not in his ſalvation!" Will not the ſame cauſe produce the ſame effect? Will not "Jehovah hear this, and be wroth?" Will not "a fire be kindled againſt Jacob, and anger "alſo come up againſt Iſrael! For this cauſe," ſaith an Apoſtle to the irreverent Corinthian receivers, "many are weak and ſickly among you, and "many ſleep." 1 Cor. xi. 30.

26. *He cauſed an eaſt wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the ſouth wind.* 27. *He rained fleſh alſo upon them as duſt, and feathered fowls like as the ſand of the ſea.* 28. *And he let it fall in the midſt of their camp, round about their habitations.* 29. *So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own deſire.* 30. *They were not eſtranged from their luſt; but while the meat was yet in their mouths,* 31. *The wrath of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of them, and ſmote down the choſen* men *of Iſrael.*

The people, diſcontented with manna, aſked, in a tumultuous and rebellious way, for fleſh, at the ſame time diſtruſting the power of God to give it them in the wilderneſs. Fleſh, however, was procured.

cured. A wind, proper for the occaſion, went forth from Jehovah, and brought a cloud of quails, which furniſhed the whole camp with a moſt delicious kind of fleſh food, for the ſpace of an entire month. But from the event we learn, that inordinate deſires, though ſometimes complied with, and ſatisfied by heaven, do not therefore go unpuniſhed; on the contrary, they are often puniſhed, by being complied with. The bleſſings, choſen for us by God, are bleſſings indeed, and, like the manna, bring no ſorrow with them: but when we chuſe for ourſelves, and are ſo unhappy as to be gratified in that choice, our portion too often proves a curſe; and while the much loved morſel is yet between our teeth, "the "wrath of God comes upon us," for making a wrong choice. This will always be the caſe in the end, whenever earth is preferred to heaven, and ſenſe to faith.

32. *For all this they ſinned ſtill: and believed not for his wondrous works.* 33. *Therefore their days did he conſume in vanity, and their years in trouble.*

Mercies are followed by provocations; provocations are puniſhed with judgments; to judgments ſucceed repeated provocations, which call down freſh judgments. Immediately after the hiſtory of the quails, we read of a ſedition ſtirred up by Aaron and Miriam, and of new murmurs at the report, brought by the ſpies, concerning the promiſed land; in conſequence of which laſt, the nation had been deſtroyed, but for the interceſſion of Moſes; and the whole generation of thoſe who came out of Egypt, except Joſhua and Caleb, actually fell in the wilderneſs, waſted

wasted and consumed by various plagues and calamities, during a forty years peregrination. See Numb. xii. xiii. xiv. St. Jude makes mention of such a generation in the early days of the Christian church, speakers of "hard speeches against Christ, murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts;" and he therefore puts converts "in remembrance, how "that the Lord, having saved the people out of the "land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that be-"lieved not." Jude, verse 5, and 15. Because, notwithstanding all that Jesus has done, and continues to do for the church, men "sin yet more, and believe not "for his wondrous works," but either despise the heavenly country, or despair of obtaining it, therefore is the hand of God heavy upon the world; "vanity and trouble" wear out the life of man; and they who have passed the waters of baptism, fall short of the promised rest.

34. *When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned, and inquired early after God.* 35. *And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer.* 36. *Nevertheless did they flatter him with their mouth, and they lyed unto him with their tongues.* 37. *For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.*

Several instances of this behaviour occur in the history of Korah's rebellion and punishment, of the fiery serpents, and of Israel and Moab. See Numb. xvi. xx. xxi. xxv. The Israelites, in this particular, resembled their great persecutor Pharaoh; their repentance, which came with the divine judgments, went also away with them, and appeared no more.

By

By night the dew falleth from heaven, and refreſheth the weary ground, and cauſeth the green herb and the flower of the field to revive and ſpring; but in the morning, the ſun ariſeth with a burning heat, and preſently the dew is evaporated, the graſs withereth, the flower fadeth, and the ground again becometh parched and dry, as before. Thus it is with man. Adverſity is the night, and grace is the dew, by which his heart is made tender and religious, and good reſolutions are formed, and begin to ſhoot; but returning proſperity has the force and effect of a ſummer ſun; at it's preſence piety vaniſheth, reſolutions come to nothing, and the heart is once more hardened. "O Ephraim," exclaims Jehovah by his prophet, "what ſhall I do unto thee? O Judah what "ſhall I do unto thee? for your goodneſs is as a "morning cloud, and as the early dew it paſſes "away." Hoſ. vi. 4.. Who, that hath been converſant in the houſe of mourning, and about the bed of ſickneſs, but muſt have ſeen frequent inſtances of a temporary and deceitful repentance? Whoſe heart doth not reproach him with ſome of theſe backſlidings of Iſrael? In the day, therefore, of health, and ſtrength, and proſperity, before the indignation of heaven break forth, and the right aiming thunderbolts fly abroad, from a motive of love, not of fear, let us "ſeek early after God, and return from our "ſins, remembering the rock of our ſalvation, and "the high God, our Redeemer." Thus may we entertain ſome hope, that our converſion is ſincere; that we do not "flatter, and lie" unto our Maker; that our "heart is right with him," and we ſhall

continue "ſtedfaſt in his covenant." And then, a plant that is ſet and lives in the heat of the day, how will it thrive, and flouriſh, under the cool and moiſt influences of night?

38. *But he* being *full of compaſſion, forgave their iniquity, and deſtroyed* them *not*; *yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not ſtir up all his wrath.* 39. *For he remembered that they* were but *fleſh*; *a wind*, or, *breath, that paſſeth away, and cometh not again.*

Had God "ſtirred up all his wrath," the Iſraelites muſt have been exterminated in the wilderneſs. But then the promiſes made to Abraham, of mercy and "compaſſion" to them, and by them to all mankind, had failed. Therefore they were "forgiven," and not "deſtroyed": judgment was executed, from time to time, upon the perſons of offenders; but ſtill a remnant was left; the nation ſubſiſted, until the Seed came, to whom the promiſe was made. Nay, although, in conſequence of their laſt and greateſt crime, their polity was ſubverted with their city and temple, the race is yet marvellouſly preſerved; and, we truſt, preſerved for mercy, to be ſhewn them in the laſt days. Be not angry, O Lord Jeſu, for ever, with them, or with us; but remember of what materials we are made, and into what a ſtate we are fallen; how weak and how frail we are; how liable to be ſeduced into ſin, and blinded by error: remember this, O Lord, and forgive us; and teach us to remember it, that we may forgive one another.

40. *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderneſs,* and *grieve him in the deſert?* 41. *Yea, they turned back,*

back, and tempted God, and limited the holy One of Iſrael. 42. *They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the hand of the enemy:* 43. *How he had wrought his ſigns in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:*

The queſtion which the Pſalmiſt here aſks, concerning Iſrael in the wilderneſs, is elſewhere aſked by him, concerning mankind in general: "Who can "tell how oft he offendeth?" Pſ. xix. 12. God informs Moſes, who had interceded for the people, and, in the name of the great Mediator, obtained their pardon, that "thoſe men which had ſeen his "glory, and his miracles which he did in Egypt and "in the wilderneſs, had tempted him ten times, and "had not hearkened to his voice." Numb. xiv. 22. Forgetfulneſs of the mercies of redemption is the beginning of ſin; and though every one knows how to reſent and deteſt the crime of ingratitude in another, he yet thinks that his beſt benefactor will overlook the moſt flagrant inſtances of it in himſelf.

44. *And had turned their rivers into blood: and their floods, that they could not drink.* 45. *He ſent divers ſorts* of flies, Heb. *a mixture*, whether of beaſts, or inſects, noiſome and deſtructive, *among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which deſtroyed them.* 46. *He gave alſo their increaſe unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locuſt.* 47. *He deſtroyed their vines with hail, and their ſycamore trees with froſt.* 48. *He gave up their cattle alſo to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts*, or, *flaſhes of lightning.*

The Pſalm goes back to the ſubject of Iſraelitiſh ingratitude, mentioned at the beginning, verſe 11,

12. in order to introduce an account of the miracles wrought in Egypt, previous to the Exodus. These miracles were intended to evince the superiority of Jehovah over the elements and powers of nature, which at that time were objects of worship amongst the Egyptians, but plainly appeared to act at the command of Moses, in subordination to their great Creator, the God of the Hebrews. In the heavens, on the earth, and in the waters, supremacy and independency were demonstrated to belong to him only: fire and air, thunder and lightning, wind, rain, and hail obeyed his word: rivers became blood, and their inhabitants perished; insects and animals left their wonted habitations, to destroy vegetables, or torment man: so that wherever the gods of Egypt were supposed to reside, and to exert their influences in favour of their votaries, in all places, and all circumstances, victory declared for Jehovah. Hence modern as well as antient idolaters may learn, not to put their trust in the world, but in him who made, and who can and will destroy it; whose power can render the most insignificant of his creatures instruments of his vengeance, and, in a moment, arm all the elements against sinners; and whose mercy will employ that power in the final salvation of the church; when, as the author of the book of Wisdom expresseth it, "He shall make the creature his weapon for the re-"venge of his enemies, and the world shall fight for "him against the unwise." Wisd. v. 17, 20. The curious and striking reflections which that author makes on the plagues of Egypt, in Chap. xi, xvii, xviii, xix. are well worthy an attentive perusal. It

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is alſo to be obſerved, that St. John deſcribes the judgments of the laſt days in terms plainly alluding to thoſe poured out upon the Egyptians, "as locuſts "and frogs; blood and darkneſs," &c. See Rev. ix, and xvi, et al. Under theſe images are repreſented, falſe teachers and erroneous doctrines, carnality and ignorance, and, in a word, whatever contributes to ravage the moral or ſpiritual world, to deface the beauty of holineſs, and deſtroy the fruits of faith. And of all the divine judgments, theſe are by far the moſt dreadful, though generally the leaſt dreaded.

49. *He caſt upon them the fierceneſs of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by ſending evil angels among them.*

Some of the Egyptian plagues having been ſpecified in the foregoing verſes, others of them are here thrown together, and the whole ſcene is affirmed to have been a full diſplay of wrath and vengeance, executed upon the oppreſſors of the church by מלאכים רעים "evil angels, agents, or meſſengers;" whether by this expreſſion, we underſtand the material inſtruments of divine diſpleaſure; or angels employed as miniſters of vengeance; or the actual appearance and miniſtration of evil ſpirits, ſuffered to torment the wicked in this world, as they certainly will do, in the next. Tradition ſeems to have favoured this laſt opinion, ſince the author of the book of Wiſdom, above referred to, deſcribes the Egyptian darkneſs as a kind of temporary hell, in which there appeared to the wicked, whoſe conſciences ſuggeſted to them every thing that was horrible, "a fire "kindled of itſelf very dreadful; they were ſcared

" with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents;
" and they were vexed with monstrous apparitions,
" so that they fainted, and died for fear; while over
" them was spread an heavy night, an image of that
" darkness which should afterwards receive them."
Wisd. xvii.

50. *He made a way to his anger, he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;* 51. *And smote all the first born in Egypt; the chief of* their *strength in the tabernacles of Ham:*

The last plague was the death of the first born both of man and beast; Exod. xii. 29. when God, having removed every obstacle that mercy had thrown in the path of justice, " made a way to his " indignation," which then rushed forth like a fiery stream. An unlimited commission was given to the destroyer, who at midnight passed through the land, and gave the fatal stroke in every house. " While " all things, O Lord, were in quiet silence, and " that night was in the midst of her swift course, " thine Almighty WORD leapt down from heaven " out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war " into the midst of a land of destruction, and " brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp " sword, and standing up, filled all things with " death: and it touched the heaven, but it stood " upon the earth." Wisd. xviii. 14. Pharaoh and all his servants rose up in the night; there was a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt; and universal consternation reigned, inferior only to that which is to extend it's empire over the world, when " the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be

" raised."

"raised." May we be saved, like Israel, in that hour, through the blood of the true paschal Lamb, slain to take away the sins of the world. "When I "see the blood," says Jehovah to his people, "I will "pass over you."

52. *But made his own people to go forth like sheep; and guided them in the wilderness, like a flock; 53. And he led them on safely, so that they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. 54. And he brought them to the border of his Sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased. 55. He cast out the heathen also before them; and divided them an inheritance by line: and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.*

Having related the punishments inflicted on Egypt, the Psalmist returns to those mercies experienced by the Israelites, when God overthrew their enemies, took them under his protection, fed and conducted them in the wilderness, brought them to the promised land, expelled the heathen, settled his people, and at length fixed his residence on mount Sion, which is represented as the conquest and acquisition of his own arm; since the victories of Joshua, &c. were all owing to the divine presence and assistance. The Christian church, after her redemption by "the blood of the Lamb," passed 300 years in a state of minority, as it were, and under persecution, which, with allusion to what befel Israel of old, is called in the Revelation, her flight and abode in the WILDERNESS. Rev. xii. 6. At length, the true, "Joshua," or JESUS, "brought" her "into the possession of the Gentiles;" see Acts

vii. 45. and ſhe enjoyed a temporary reſt and proſperity. But no terreſtrial Canaan, no ſecular advantages ſhould make us forget, as the Jews did, and as Chriſtians are apt to do, that the church is in the wilderneſs, while ſhe is in the world; and that "there "remaineth yet" another and far more glorious "reſt for the people of God," after which they ought ever to be aſpiring. See Heb. iv. 9.

56. *Yet they tempted and provoked the moſt high God, and kept not his teſtimonies:* 57. *But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aſide like a deceitful bow.* 58. *For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealouſy with their graven images.*

The Iſraelites, when ſettled in the promiſed land, ſoon ſhewed themſelves to be the genuine deſcendants of thoſe men, who tempted God in the deſert. We can hardly read two chapters in the book of Judges, but we meet with the words, "And the children of "Iſrael again did evil in the ſight of the Lord." For this their frequent revolting they are compared to "a deceitful bow," which, when put to the trial, is ſure to diſappoint the archer, either dropping the arrow at his feet, or carrying it wide of the mark. Their zeal and love were either wholly relaxed and enervated by ſenſuality and indolence, or elſe turned aſide, and miſplaced on falſe objects of worſhip. Thus, in the preſent decline of religion, the devotion of the Romaniſts hath attached itſelf to ſaints, angels, and images; while that of Proteſtants ſleepeth, and muſt be awakened. In what manner, is known to God only.

59. *When*

59. *When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Iſrael:* 60. *So that he forſook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent* which *he placed among men:* 61. *And delivered his ſtrength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hand.*

Rebellion againſt God will, ſooner or later, draw down his vengeance, and cauſe the moſt beloved nation to be "abhorred" by him: he will forſake the place of his reſidence, "the tent placed among men," where he dwelleth by his Spirit; and the church, by which his "ſtrength," and his "glory" are manifeſted to the world, ſhall go "into captivity, and "the enemies hand." All this we are taught by that which came to paſs in Iſrael, when for the ſins of prieſts and people, the ark of God, which then abode in Shiloh, was ſuffered to fall into the hands of the Philiſtines. 1 Sam. iv. The preſent ſtate of Jeruſalem, and of all the once flouriſhing eaſtern and African churches, ſpeaks aloud the ſame awful and concerning truth. "He that hath ears to hear, let "him hear."

62. *He gave his people over alſo to the ſword: and was wroth with his inheritance.* 63. *The fire conſumed their young men: and their maidens were not given to marriage.* 64. *Their prieſts fell by the ſword: and their widows made no lamentation.*

Theſe verſes refer to the ſlaughter of Iſrael by the Philiſtines, which was an effect of divine wrath, compared here, as elſewhere, to "a conſuming fire;" they refer likewiſe to the death of old Eli, of Hophni and Phinehas, and the widow of Phinehas, who expired in child-bed, on hearing the mournful news.

1 Sam.

1 Sam. iv. History abounds with the tragical ſtories of wars and captivities: Scripture informs us, they are the judgments of God againſt ſin: but calamities affect us not, 'till they become our own: it is well if they reform us, even when they do become ſo.

65. *Then the* LORD *awaked, as one out of ſleep, and like a mighty man, that ſhouteth, by reaſon of wine.*

While, by God's permiſſion, the Philiſtines were chaſtiſing his people for their ſins, he held his peace, and ſeemed unconcerned, as one aſleep. But when due chaſtiſement had brought the delinquents to themſelves, the cries of penitent Iſrael awakened, as it were, and called forth the zeal of the Lord of hoſts, to vindicate his honour, and deliver his ſervants: and then the vigour of his operations was ſuch, as might be compared to the alacrity and courage of a mighty champion, when, refreſhed and inſpirited by wine, he attacks his adverſaries, and bears down all before him. Under all our ſufferings, let us reſt contented with this aſſurance, that God acts the part of a father; and will therefore remove the rod, when it has anſwered the end propoſed.

66. *And he ſmote his enemies in the hinder parts; he put them to a perpetual reproach.*

The former clauſe of this verſe may be rendered, "And he repulſed, or, drove his enemies back;" as Pſalm ix. 3. "When mine enemies are turned "back;" the word אחור being the ſame, in both places. But as that part of the ſacred hiſtory is here alluded to, in which the Philiſtines are ſaid to have been plagued with "emerods," or "hemorrhoids," while the ark was amongſt them, the paſſage is generally

nerally rendered, as in our tranſlation, and ſuppoſed to intend that particular plague. Thus much, however, is certain, that Dagon fell before the ark, which his worſhippers were glad to ſend back, with acknowledgments of the vengeance inflicted on them by the ſuperior power of the God of Iſrael, who could puniſh where, and when, and how he pleaſed. See 1 Sam. v. vi.

67. *Moreover he refuſed the tabernacle of Joſeph, and choſe not the tribe of Ephraim.* 68. *But choſe the tribe of Judah, the mount Sion which he loved.* 69. *And he built his ſanctuary like high* palaces, *like the earth which he hath eſtabliſhed for ever.*

The ark, after it's return, went no more to Shiloh, which was in the tribe of Ephraim, the ſon of Joſeph, but was brought firſt to Kiriathaim, 1 Sam. vi. 21. a city of the tribe of Judah, and from thence, after a ſhort ſtay at the houſe of Obed Edom, to mount Sion, 1. Chron. xiv. and xv. which was the choſen and highly favoured mount: where was afterwards erected, by Solomon, a magnificent and permanent habitation for the God of Jacob, during the continuance of the old diſpenſation; a reſemblance of that eternal temple, in which all the fulneſs of the Godhead hath ſince dwelt bodily. The divine preſence removed at this time to the tribe of Judah, becauſe out of that tribe, after the rejection of Saul, came the great repreſentative, as well as progenitor, of King Meſſiah.

70. *He choſe David alſo his ſervant, and took him from the ſheep folds.* 71. *From following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people,*

people, and Iſrael his inheritance. 72. *So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the ſkilfulneſs of his hands.*

The call of David from a ſheepfold to a throne teacheth us, that he who hath ſhewed himſelf faithful in a few and ſmall concerns, is worthy of promotion to more and more important cares; that the qualifications, requiſite for the due diſcharge of high offices, are beſt learned, at firſt, in an inferior ſtation, eſpecially if it be one that will inure to labour and vigilance; and that kings are to conſider themſelves as "ſhepherds;" which conſideration would perhaps teach them their duty better than all the precepts in the world. From the laſt verſe, relative to David's manner of conducting himſelf after his advancement, we learn, that integrity and diſcretion, when they meet in the ſame perſon, form a complete Ruler, and one fit to repreſent that bleſſed perſon, who entered, like his father David, through ſufferings into his glory; who governeth his church in wiſdom and righteouſneſs; and of whom it is ſaid, by the evangelical prophet, "He ſhall feed his flock like "a ſhepherd, he ſhall gather the lambs with his arm, "and carry them in his boſom, and ſhall gently lead "thoſe that are with young." Iſai. xl. 11.

PSALM

XVI DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

The argument of this Pſalm is nearly the ſame with that of the lxxivth. The church, perſecuted and afflicted, ſets forth, 1—3. the ſacrilegious devaſtation, and cruel ſlaughter, made by the enemy, with 4. the reproach occaſioned thereby; 5—7. ſhe prayeth for redreſs and deliverance; 8, 9. confeſſeth, and intreateth forgiveneſs of the ſins, which had brought theſe calamities upon her; and then, 10—12. aſketh a removal of her reproach and miſery; promiſing 13. endleſs gratitude and praiſe for the ſame. We meet with paſſages of this Pſalm, Jer. x. 25. 1 Macc. vii. 17. but when it was compoſed, is not known.

1. *O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance, thy holy temple have they defiled: they have laid Jeruſalem on heaps.*

Three deplorable calamities are here enumerated by the faithful; the alienation of God's inheritance, the profanation of the ſanctuary, and the deſolation of the beloved city. When we repreſent, in our prayers, the ſufferings and humiliation of the church,

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we take an effectual method of awakening the compaſſion, and recalling the favour of heaven. Every redeemed ſoul is the inheritance, the temple, the city of God. When ſin enters, and takes poſſeſſion, the inheritance is alienated, the temple defiled, the city deſolated.

2. *The dead bodies of thy ſervants have they given* to be *meat unto the fowls of heaven, the fleſh of thy ſaints unto the beaſts of the earth.* 3. *Their blood have they ſhed like water round about Jeruſalem: and* there was *none to bury them.*

That horrible carnage, which attends the ſiege and capture of a city, is the fourth of thoſe calamities, bewailed in our Pſalm. To behold, or even to imagine, heaps of ſlaughtered bodies lying unburied, and expoſed to birds and beaſts of prey, is inexpreſſibly ſhocking to humanity. But with what unconcern are we accuſtomed to view, on all ſides of us, multitudes "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins," torn in pieces, and devoured by wild paſſions, filthy luſts, and infernal ſpirits, thoſe dogs and vultures of the moral world? Yet to a diſcerning eye, and a thinking mind, the latter is by far the more melancholy ſight of the two.

4. *We are become a reproach to our neighbours; a ſcorn and deriſion to them that are round about us.*

A fifth calamity, incident to an afflicted church, is to become, like captive Iſrael, the "ſcorn and de-"riſion" of infidels, who fail not, at ſuch ſeaſons, to reproach her, and blaſpheme her God. We know how to anſwer thoſe, who reproach us with our ſufferings, for ſo their predeceſſors reproached our Maſter;

ter; but what ſhall we ſay, if we have given the enemy occaſion to reproach us with our ſins? The only real diſgrace of religion, is the wickedneſs of it's profeſſors.

5. *How long*, LORD? *wilt thou be angry for ever? Shall thy jealouſy burn like fire?*

Parched, and exhauſted, amidſt the flames of perſecution, we behold Sion panting for the comforts of redemption. The extent and continuance of her troubles cauſe her to fear a total extermination; and, by the queſtions here aſked, ſhe tacitly reminds God of his promiſes not to give her up, and deſtroy her "for ever," on account of Meſſias, whom ſhe was, in the fulneſs of time, to bring forth.

6. *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.* 7. *For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waſte his dwelling place.*

This, though uttered in the form of a wiſh, or prayer is to be conſidered, like many other paſſages of the ſame nature, as a prediction of what would afterwards come to paſs. Pagan ambition and cruelty were often employed to chaſtiſe offending Iſrael; but were, themſelves, notwithſtanding, juſtly puniſhed, in their turn, by other powers, raiſed up for that end. That relation, in which the church ſtands to God, cauſes him, upon her repentance, to appear in her behalf, and to execute vengeance on her oppreſſors, who "know him not, nor call upon his name." "We are thine," ſaith Iſaiah, "thou never bearеſt "rule over them, they were not called by thy name." lxiii. 19. The church, for her ſins, may deſerve to ſuffer;

ſuffer; but her enemies are not therefore without guilt, nor will they eſcape without puniſhment.

8. *O remember not againſt us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies ſpeedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.* 9. *Help us, O God of our ſalvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our ſins for thy name's ſake.*

Affliction hath then wrought it's intended effect, when it hath convinced us of ſin, and led us to repentance; when, brought back by it, like the returning prodigal, to the houſe and preſence of our heavenly father, we acknowledge our guilt as the cauſe of our miſery, and intreat forgiveneſs of the one, in order to obtain a releaſe from the other; not pleading our own merits, but the mercies of God our Saviour, and the glory of his name.

10. *Wherefore ſhould the heathen ſay, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our ſight, by the revenging of the blood of thy ſervants which is ſhed*; or, *let the vengeance of thy ſervants blood that is ſhed, be known among the heathen that is in our ſight.*

It is for "the glory of God's name," to deliver his church; becauſe, while ſhe is in trouble, that name is blaſphemed by the enemy, as if he wanted either power, or will, to prevent or remove the calamities of his ſervants. Prayer is therefore here made by the faithful, that God, not to gratify any vindictive ſpirit of theirs, but to vindicate his own attributes, would break the teeth of the oppreſſor, and work a public and glorious ſalvation for his choſen; at beholding which, the very adverſaries themſelves might poſſibly be converted.

11. *Let*

11. *Let the ſighing of the priſoner come before thee: according to the greatneſs of thy power preſerve thou thoſe that are appointed to die.*

Next to thoſe who had been ſlain, the caſe of ſuch as groaned in captivity, lying bound in chains and fetters, under ſentence of death, to be inflicted at the will of their cruel and inſulting conquerors, is recommended to God. The Chriſtian, though he may at preſent be ſubject to none of theſe external calamities, forgets not that he is often perſecuted, and led captive, by his own deſires, and bound in the chains of his ſins; that the world to him is a priſon; that ſentence of death is paſſed upon him, and he knoweth not how ſoon that ſentence may be executed. How properly, therefore, and how fervently may he, at all times, pray, "O let the ſigh-"ing of the priſoner come before thee; according "to the greatneſs of thy power preſerve thou thoſe "that are appointed to die."

12. *And render unto our neighbours ſevenfold into their boſom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O* LORD.

That is, As they have reproached thee with weakneſs, ſo manifeſt to others their weakneſs, who are but ſinful duſt and aſhes; as they have endeavoured to make thee contemptible, ſo let the world have juſt cauſe to deſpiſe them, who have thus preſumptuouſly offended; according as it is written, "Them that "honour me I will honour, and they that deſpiſe "me ſhall be lightly eſteemed." 1 Sam. ii. 30. And however different the appearance of things may now

be, this will certainly be found true, in every inſtance, at the laſt day.

13. *So we thy people, and ſheep of thy paſture, will give thee thanks for ever: we will ſhew forth thy praiſe to all generations.*

Such is the reſolution of a church, under perſecution; and ſuch ought to be the practice of every church, when delivered out of it, and reſtored to the favour and protection of her God. The ſame is the duty of every ſoul, with regard to afflictions and mercies of a private kind. But how glorious will be the day, when, triumphant over ſin and ſorrow, over every thing that exalteth and oppoſeth itſelf, the church univerſal ſhall behold the adverſary diſarmed for ever; while ſhe herſelf, placed in paſtures of joy, and led to the waters of eternal comfort, ſhall, from age to age, inceſſantly ſing the praiſes of her great Shepherd and Biſhop, her King, and her God!

PSALM LXXX.

ARGUMENT.

The church, ſtill in captivity, 1—3. crieth unto God for help and redemption; 4—7. complaineth of her grievous afflictions; 8—13. deſcribeth her former exaltation, and preſent depreſſion, under the beautiful figure of a Vine; 14—16. returneth again to her ſupplications, and 17—19. prayeth for the advent of Meſſiah, to quicken and comfort her,

her, vowing all loyal obedience, adoration, and praiſe to him, as the author of her ſalvation.

1. *Give ear, O ſhepherd of Iſrael, thou that leadeſt Joſeph like a flock; thou that dwelleſt between the cherubims, ſhine forth.*

The Chriſtian church is now become the "Iſrael" of God: Jeſus Chriſt is the "ſhepherd" of this Iſrael, who leadeth his people "like a flock;" he dwelleth in the midſt of them by his Spirit, as of old he dwelt in the holy places, "between the cherubims." Let us beſeech him to hearken to our prayers, and to manifeſt the glory of his power, in our defence and deliverance.

2. *Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manaſſeh, ſtir up thy ſtrength, and come and ſave us.*

God is intreated to go forth, in his ſtrength and his ſalvation, before the tribes of Iſrael, as formerly in the wilderneſs. Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manaſſeh are particularly mentioned, perhaps, becauſe, according to the eſtabliſhed order, thoſe three tribes immediately followed the ark and cherubim, the ſymbols of the divine preſence. See Numb. ii. 18.

3. *Turn*, or, *reſtore us again, O God, and cauſe thy face to ſhine; and we ſhall be ſaved.*

This verſe is a kind of Chorus, occurring three times in the courſe of our Pſalm. It implies, that the church is in captivity, from which ſhe prayeth to be "reſtored" to her former freedom and proſperity; that ſhe expecteth ſuch reſtoration, not from any might or merit of her own, but from the grace and

mercy of her Saviour; as well knowing, that her night can be turned into day, and her winter give place to ſpring, only by the ſun of righteouſneſs riſing, and cauſing his face to ſhine upon her deſolations. This ought, therefore, to be the wiſh and the prayer of every perſecuted church, and of every afflicted ſoul.

4. O LORD *God of hoſts, how long wilt thou be angry againſt the prayer of thy people?*

The ſins of a people may for a time "ſeparate be-"tween them and their God, and hide his face from "them that he will not hear;" Iſai. lix. 2. he may "cover himſelf with a cloud, that their prayers ſhould "not paſs through;" Lam. iii. 44. and ſeem to reject even the devotions of his diſtreſſed ſervants, while he is proving the ſtrength of their faith, and the ſincerity of their repentance. But if the former be ſtrong, and the latter ſincere, they will continue to aſk, till they have obtained; nor ceaſe to knock, till the door be opened.

5. *Thou feedeſt them with the bread of tears*, or, *of weeping; and giveſt them tears to drink in great meaſure.*

There cannot be a more ſtriking picture of Sion in captivity! Her bread is dipped in tears, and her cup is filled to the brim with them: no time is free from grief and lamentation. They who ſin, muſt ſubmit to penance; which if a man doth not impoſe on himſelf, God will impoſe it on him: whereas, if we judged ourſelves, we ſhould not be thus judged of the Lord. The church hath appointed ſeaſons, and

and given directions for this purpoſe; but who obſerves either the one, or the other?

6. *Thou makeſt us a ſtrife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themſelves.*

Iſrael, when forſaken by her God, was a prey, for which all the neighbouring nations contended, exulting over her, and ſcoffing at that condition, to which, not their counſels, or armies, but her own iniquities, had reduced her. Hence let us learn how to form a juſt eſtimate of the real ſtate both of communities and individuals. Righteouſneſs alone exalteth man; ſin is his reproach, and will be his deſtruction.

7. *Turn us again, O God of hoſts, and cauſe thy face to ſhine, and we ſhall be ſaved.* See above, ver. 3. 8. *Thou haſt brought a vine out of Egypt: thou haſt caſt out the heathen, and planted it.*

God is reminded of the favour once ſhewn by him to the church of Iſrael, and of that proſperity, which ſhe once enjoyed. She is compared to a "vine," removed, from the unkindly ſoil of Egypt, to the happier regions of Canaan, and there planted by Jehovah, in the place of nations extirpated for their unfruitfulneſs. The vine is a plant weak, and lowly, and needing ſupport; when ſupported, wild and luxuriant, unleſs reſtrained by the pruning knife; capable of producing the moſt valuable fruit; but, if barren, the moſt unprofitable among trees, and fit only for the flames. In all theſe reſpects it is a lively emblem of the church, and uſed as ſuch by Iſaiah, v. 7. by Ezekiel, xv. xvii. xix. and by our Lord himſelf, Matt. xxi. 33. The Chriſtian church, after

her redemption, by the death and reſurrection of Jeſus, was planted in the heathen world, as Iſrael had been in Canaan; and the deſcription ſuits one as well as the other.

9. *Thou preparedſt* room *before it, and didſt cauſe it to take deep root, and it filled the land.* 10. *The hills were covered with the ſhadow of it, and the boughs thereof* were like *the goodly cedars*; or, *and the goodly cedars* were covered *with the boughs thereof.*

As the vine ſtriketh it's roots deep into the ſoil prepared for it, and then diffuſeth it's numerous branches all around, covering the fertile hills, by the ſides of which it is planted, or running up the lofty cedars, to the bodies of which it is joined; ſuch was the growth and fruitfulneſs of the Iſraelitiſh church; but much greater was that of the church Chriſtian. Her roots were faſt fixed in the hearts and affections of the faithful, and her boughs ſhot forth abundantly; they often felt the knife, but increaſed under it, both in number and vigour; till, at length, ſhe overſhadowed the Roman empire with her branches, and repleniſhed the earth with her fruit, grateful to God and man.

11. *She ſent out her boughs unto the ſea, and her branches unto the river.*

This relates to the extent of Paleſtine, which was occupied by the tribes of Iſrael, even from the Mediterranean "ſea," weſtward, to the "river" Euphrates, eaſtward. This was promiſed, Deut. xi. 24. "From the river Euphrates to the uttermoſt ſea ſhall "your coaſt be;" and fulfilled in the days of Solomon. See 1 K. iv. 21. Pſ. lxxii. 8. To the Chriſtian

tian church the whole earth was the land of promiſe, and the Goſpel was preached to all nations. "I will "give thee," ſaith Jehovah to Chriſt, "the heathen "for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of "the earth for thy poſſeſſion." Pſ. ii. 8.

12. *Why haſt thou* then *broken down her hedges, ſo that all they which paſs by the way, do pluck her?*

The Pſalmiſt, having deſcribed the exaltation of Iſrael, under the figure of a vine, proceeds, under the ſame figure, to lament her depreſſion. She is now repreſented as deprived of the protection of God, the counſels of the wiſe, and the arms of the valiant; of all her bulwarks and fortifications, and whatever elſe could contribute to her defence and ſecurity; ſo that, like a vineyard without a fence, ſhe lay open, on every ſide, to the incurſions and ravages of her neighbouring adverſaries; who ſoon ſtripped her of all that was valuable, and trod her under foot.

13. *The boar out of the wood doth waſte it, and the wild beaſt of the field doth devour it.*

Fierce, and unrelenting, her heathen perſecutor iſſued, at different times, from his abode, like a "wild boar" out of the foreſt, reſolved not only to ſpoil and plunder, but to eradicate and extirpate her for ever. Nor let the church Chriſtian imagine, that theſe things relate only to her elder ſiſter. Greater mercies, and more excellent gifts, ſhould excite in her greater thankfulneſs, and call forth more excellent virtues; otherwiſe, they will ſerve only to enhance her account, and multiply her ſorrows. If ſhe ſin, and fall after the ſame example of unbelief, ſhe muſt not think to be diſtinguiſhed in her puniſhment,

unleſs by the ſeverity of it. She may expect to ſee the favour of heaven withdrawn, and the ſecular arm, inſtead of ſupporting, employed to cruſh her; her diſcipline may be annihilated, her unity broken, her doctrines perverted, her worſhip deformed, her practice corrupted, her poſſeſſions alienated, and her revenues ſeized; till at length the word be given from above, and ſome antichriſtian power be unchained, to execute upon her the full vengeance due to her crimes. Unclean deſires, and furious paſſions, are the enemies of the ſoul, which deface her beauty, and devour all the productions of grace, in that leſſer vineyard of God.

14. *Return, we beſeech thee, O God of hoſts; look down from heaven, and behold, and viſit this vine;* 15. *And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madeſt ſo ſtrong for thine own ſelf.*

The church, thus diſtreſſed and deſolated, offereth a prayer for the return of the divine favour, and for a gracious viſitation from on high; ſhe beſeecheth God to look down, with an eye of pity, from heaven, on the vineyard, which his own hands had "planted," and on that royal branch, the family of David, in particular, which he had raiſed and eſtabliſhed for himſelf, to accompliſh his eternal purpoſe of ſaving mankind by Meſſiah, who was, one day, to ſpring from the root of Jeſſe. The Chaldee Paraphraſt expounds "the branch," of Meſſiah himſelf, על מלכא משיחא "On King Meſ-"ſiah, whom thou haſt eſtabliſhed," &c. So do the Rabbies, Aben Ezra, and Obadiah, cited by Dr. Hammond.

Hammond. And the LXX, inſtead of ſuppoſing the word בן "a ſon," to refer to "vine," and ſo ſignify a "branch," which, in the Hebrew ſtyle, is, "a ſon "of the vine," have rendered the paſſage, επι υιον ανθρωπου, "on the ſon of man;" an expreſſion, actually uſed by the Pſalmiſt, two verſes below. To the advent of this ſon of man, Iſrael was ever accuſtomed to look forward, in time of affliction; on his ſecond and glorious advent the Chriſtian church muſt fix her eye, in the day of her calamities.

16. It is *burnt with fire:* it is *cut down*, or, *dug up: they periſh at the rebuke of thy countenance.*

The ſad eſtate of the vineyard is yet again ſet forth, to excite the compaſſion of heaven. As to the latter clauſe of this verſe, if it be rendered, as our tranſlators have rendered it, in the preſent time, it ſeems to relate to the Iſraelites, and the deſtruction made amongſt them by the wrath of God. If it have a future rendering, "they ſhall periſh at the "rebuke of thy countenance," it may be ſuppoſed to predict the fate of the adverſaries, when God ſhould deliver his people out of their hands.

17. *Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the ſon of man*, whom *thou madeſt ſtrong for thyſelf.*

Theſe phraſes, "the man of thy right hand," and "the ſon of man," if at all applicable, in a lower and ſubordinate ſenſe, to a temporal king of Iſrael, conſidered as a repreſentative of Meſſiah, are moſt certainly, in their full and prophetical acceptation, intended

intended to denote King Meſſiah himſelf.* Aſſured of his coming, the church prayeth, that the "hand," the protection, and the power of Jehovah might be "upon" him, over him, and with him, in his great undertaking, finally to deliver her out of all her troubles, and to "lead her captivity captive."

18. *So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.*

The end of our redemption is, that we ſhould ſerve him who hath redeemed us, and "go back" no more to our old ſins. That ſoul which hath been "quickened" and made alive by Chriſt, ſhould live to his honour and glory; that mouth which hath been opened by him, can do no leſs than ſhew forth his praiſe, and "call upon his" ſaving "name."

19. *Turn us again, O* LORD *God of hoſts: cauſe thy face to ſhine, and we ſhall be ſaved.* See verſe 3.

* "Virum dexteræ tuæ:" Davidem a te deſignatum et confirmatum Regem, et in ejus figurâ Chriſtum. BOSSUET.

PSALM LXXXI.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm, whenſoever, or by whomſoever compoſed, was, probably, intended to be ſung at the feaſt of trumpets, as alſo at any other feaſt time. It contains 1—3. an exhortation duly to obſerve the feſtivals of the church, 4, 5. as God had appointed, who

is

is introduced expoſtulating with his people, on account 6—10. of his mercies, and 11, 12. their ingratitude, and 13—16. under the form of a moſt affectionate wiſh, renewing his promiſes, on condition of their obedience.

1. *Sing aloud unto God our ſtrength: make a joyful noiſe unto the God of Jacob.* 2. *Take a Pſalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleaſant harp with the pſaltery.*

If Iſraelites were thus exhorted to keep their feaſt days, with joy and gladneſs of heart; to exalt their voices, and join together all their ſweeteſt inſtruments of muſic, in honour of him who had reſcued them from Egyptian bondage, and given them a law from Sinai; in what exulting ſtrains ought we to celebrate the feſtivals of the Chriſtian church? With what triumph of ſoul, and harmony of affections, are we bound to "ſing aloud to God our "ſtrength," who hath redeemed us from death, and publiſhed the Goſpel from Sion? Since, as the Apoſtle ſaith, "holy days, new moons, and ſabbath "days," of old, "were" only "a ſhadow of things "to come; but the body is of Chriſt." Col. ii. 16.

2. *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed on our ſolemn feaſt day.*

In the Jewiſh church, notice was given of feaſts, jubilees, &c. by ſound of trumpet. All the new moons, or beginnings of months, were obſerved in this manner; ſee Numb. x. 1. but on the September new moon, or firſt day of the ſeventh month, was kept

kept a great feſtival, called "the feaſt of trumpets;" Levit. xxiii. 24. Numb. xxix. 1. which, probably, is here intended. This September new moon had a particular regard paid to it, becauſe, according to the old calculation, before Iſrael came out of Egypt, it was the firſt new moon in the year, which began upon this day, the firſt of the (afterwards) ſeventh month. The tenth of the ſame month was the great day of atonement; and on the fifteenth was celebrated the feaſt of tabernacles. See Levit. xxiii. 27, and 34. Our Pſalm therefore ſeems to have been deſigned for the purpoſe of awakening and ſtirring up the devotion of the people, upon the ſolemn entrance of a month, in which they were to commemorate ſo many paſt bleſſings, prefigurative of much greater bleſſings, to come. We have now our feaſt days, our Chriſtmas, Eaſter, Whitſuntide, &c. On theſe, and all other ſolemn occaſions, let the evangelical trumpet give a ſound of victory, of liberty, of joy and rejoicing; of victory over death, of liberty from ſin, of joy and rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus our Saviour.

4. *For this* was *a ſtatute for Iſrael*, and *a law of the God of Jacob.* 5. *This he ordained in Joſeph, for a teſtimony, when he went out through*, or, *againſt the land of Egypt:* where *I heard a language that I underſtood not.*

The meaning is, that the obſervation of feaſts, with blowing of trumpets, was a ſtatute, law, or teſtimony, ordained in Joſeph, or Iſrael, by God himſelf, after he had deſtroyed the Egyptians, and brought his people into the wilderneſs, where the

law

law was given. Concerning the words, "I heard a "language that I underſtood not," it is difficult to account for the change of perſon; but the ſenſe ſeems to be, that the children of Iſrael received the law, when they had been in bondage under a people of ſtrange and barbarous language, or dialect. The paſſage is exactly parallel to that in Pſ. cxiv. 1. "When Iſrael went out of Egypt, and the houſe of "Jacob from a people of ſtrange language;" &c.— The new law, with it's ſacraments and ordinances, was promulged after the ſpiritual redemption by Chriſt, as the old law, with it's rites and ceremonies, was publiſhed, after the temporal deliverance by Moſes.

6. *I removed his ſhoulder from the burthen: his hands were delivered from the pots.*

From this verſe to the end, it is plain, that God is the ſpeaker. He reminds Iſrael of their redemption, by his mercy and power, from the burthens and the drudgery impoſed on them in Egypt. Moſes deſcribeth their then ſtate of ſervitude, by ſaying, "The Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard "bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all "manner of ſervice in the field;" Exod. i. 14. that is, probably, in making veſſels of clay, as this verſe ſeems to imply. Let us remember, that we have been eaſed of far heavier burthens, delivered from ſeverer taſkmaſters, and freed from a baſer drudgery; the intolerable load of ſin, the cruel tyranny of Satan, the vile ſervice and bitter bondage of concupiſcence.

7. *Thou calledſt in trouble, and I delivered thee: I anſwered*

anſwered thee in the ſecret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.

God declares his readineſs, at all times, to hear the prayers, and relieve the diſtreſſes of his people as he did when they cried unto him in Egypt, and in the wilderneſs, and received anſwers from the cloudy pillar. In that deep receſs he had fixed his awful throne, and from thence on proper occaſions, he manifeſted his power and glory, protecting Iſrael, and confounding their adverſaries. In Pſ. xxix. 6. it is ſaid of "Moſes, Aaron," &c. "They called upon "the Lord, and he anſwered them: he ſpake unto "them in the cloudy pillar;" which paſſage ſeems exactly parallel to that in the verſe under conſideration—"Thou calledſt, and—I anſwered thee in the "ſecret place of thunder." He who ſpake unto Iſrael in the cloudy pillar, hath ſince ſpoken to us by his Son: he who "proved them at the waters of "Meribah," Exod. xvii. 6, 7. now proves us, by various trials, in the world.

8. *Hear, O my people, and I will teſtify unto thee: O Iſrael, if thou wilt hearken unto me;* 9. *There ſhall no ſtrange God be in thee; neither ſhalt thou worſhip any ſtrange God.* 10. *I am the* LORD *thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

God here addreſſeth himſelf to the Iſraelites, putting them in remembrance of that firſt and great commandment againſt idolatry; of his claim to their obedience, as their God and Saviour; and of his being both able and willing to ſatisfy the utmoſt deſires and wiſhes of ſuch, as would apply to Him, for

bleſſing

bleſſing and comfort. Behold, then, the rebellion, the ingratitude, and the folly of that man, who ſaith, to any creature, "Thou art my God;" who beſtoweth on the world that fear, love, and adoration, which are due only to it's Creator and Redeemer; who waſteth his days in ſeeking after happineſs, where all, by their inquietude, acknowledge, that it is not to be found.

11. *But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Iſrael would none of me.* 12. *So I gave them up unto their own heart's luſt:* and *they walked in their own counſels.*

By the ſubject of an earthly prince, it is juſtly deemed a great honour, for his ſovereign to converſe with him, to counſel, and adviſe him: but from ſinful duſt and aſhes, we hear the Majeſty of heaven complaining, that he cannot obtain an audience; no one will attend to, or obſerve his ſalutary admonitions. When we ſee men enabled, by wealth and power, to accompliſh the inordinate deſires of their hearts, and carry their worldly ſchemes into execution, without meeting with any obſtructions in their way, we are apt to envy their felicity; whereas ſuch proſperity in wickedneſs is the ſureſt mark of divine diſpleaſure, the heavieſt puniſhment of diſobedience, both in individuals and communities. "My people "would not hearken to my voice, and Iſrael would "none of me: ſo I gave them up unto their own "heart's luſt: and they walked in their own counſels."

13. *O that my people had hearkened unto me,* and *Iſrael had walked in my ways!* 14. *I ſhould ſoon have*

ſubdued

ſubdued their enemies, and turned my hand againſt their adverſaries.

Such are the tender mercies of our God, that he is not only careful to provide for us the means of ſalvation, but repreſents himſelf as mourning, with a paternal affection over his children, when their frowardneſs and obſtinacy diſappoint the efforts of his love. One cannot help obſerving the ſimilitude between the complaint here uttered, and one which hath been ſince breathed forth, over the ſame people; "O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I "have gathered thy children together, even as a hen "gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye "would not!"

15. *The haters of the* LORD *ſhould have ſubmitted themſelves unto him*; or, *ſhould have failed*, or, *been ſubdued to him*; *but their time*, i. e. the time of his people, *ſhould have endured for ever.*

The tranſgreſſions of the church give her enemies all their power againſt her, calling the avenger from afar, and ſetting an edge on the ſword of the perſecutor. "Where the carcaſe is," where the Spirit of religion is departed, and has left the body to corrupt and decay, "there the eagles are gathered toge-"ther;" all the inſtruments of vengeance, terreſtrial and infernal, flock, by permiſſion, to the prey. Had not this been the caſe with regard to Iſrael, Jeruſalem had continued to be through all ages, what ſhe was in the days of Solomon, the delight of the nations, and the joy of the whole earth.

16. *He ſhould have fed them alſo with the fineſt of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock ſhould I have ſatisfied thee.*

That

That is, the Iſraelites, if obedient, would ſtill have enjoyed the ſweets of that good land, in which the Lord their God had placed them, where the fruits of the earth were produced in the higheſt perfection, and honey ſtreamed from the very rocks, ſo that no part of the country was without it's increaſe. Upon the ſame conditions of faith and obedience, do Chriſtians hold thoſe ſpiritual and eternal good things, of which the pleaſant fields and fertile hills of Canaan were ſacramental. Chriſt is the "bread" of life, he is the "rock" of ſalvation, and his promiſes are as "honey" to pious minds. But they who reject him, as their Lord and Maſter, muſt alſo loſe him, as their Saviour and their Reward.

XVI DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXXII.

ARGUMENT.

The Pſalmiſt addreſſeth himſelf to judges and magiſtrates; 1. he remindeth them of the preſence of that God whom they repreſent, and to whom they are accountable; 2—4. he exhorteth them to the due diſcharge of their office; 5. reproveth the ignorance and corruption among them; 6, 7. threateneth their fall and puniſhment; 8. prayeth for the manifeſtation of Meſſiah, and the eſtabliſhment of his righteous kingdom.

1. *God ſtandeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among Gods.*

Earthly judicatories are the appointment of God. All magiſtrates act in his name, and by virtue of his commiſſion. He is inviſibly preſent in their aſſemblies, and ſuperintends their proceedings. He receives appeals from their wrongful deciſions; he will one day rehear all cauſes at his own tribunal, and reverſe every iniquitous ſentence, before the great congregation of men and angels. Unjuſt judges muſt either diſbelieve, or forget all this. God is, in like manner, preſent to the heart of each individual; he is privy to the various reaſonings and pleadings of grace and nature, of principle and intereſt, in that leſſer court; and he is a witneſs of it's determinations; which alſo will by him be manifeſted to the world, and openly canvaſſed, when he ſitteth in judgment.

2. *How long will ye judge unjuſtly, and accept the perſons of the wicked?* 3. *Defend the poor and fatherleſs: do juſtice to the afflicted and needy.* 4. *Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.*

A charge is here given, by the Spirit of God, to all magiſtrates, much like that, which king Jehoſhaphat gave to his judges; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. "Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, "but for the LORD, who is with you in the judg-"ment. Wherefore now, let the fear of the LORD "be upon you, take heed, and do it: for there is "no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor reſpect "of perſons, nor taking of gifts." It is the glory

of

of Jehovah and his Chriſt to "accept no man's per-"ſon" in judgment; to regard neither the quality, nor the ſtation of the offender; but to give to every man, of whatever rank or degree in the world, according to his works. All the ſons of Adam were once "poor and fatherleſs, needy and afflicted," when God took their cauſe into his own hands, and by a method conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt juſtice, "delivered them out of the hand of the wicked one." Every oppreſſor of the poor is a likeneſs of "that "wicked one," and every upright judge will endeavour to reſemble the Redeemer. For this purpoſe he will be always willing to admit, diligent to diſcuſs, ſolicitous to expedite the cauſe of a poor and injured perſon, and to afford ſuch a one the ſpeedieſt, the cheapeſt, and the moſt effectual redreſs, equally contemning the offers of opulence, and the frowns of power. A judge, who acts in this manner, takes the readieſt way to obtain the favour of God; and the people will be ſure to bleſs him.

5. *They know not, neither will they underſtand; they walk on in darkneſs; all the foundations of the earth*, or, *the land, are out of courſe*; or, *nod*, or, *ſhake*.

We here find the prophet deploring, in magiſtrates, a method of proceeding contrary to that above deſcribed. He laments their voluntary ignorance in the ways of righteouſneſs, and their chuſing to "walk in darkneſs." In judges this is occaſioned by "preſents and gifts," which, as ſaith the ſon of Sirach, "blind the eyes of the wiſe." Eccluſ. xx. 29. And if once the "pillars" and "foundations" are moved from their integrity, and "ſhaken" to

and fro by every blaſt of fear and favour, what ſhall become of the political fabrick erected upon them? Verily it muſt fall, and great and terrible will be the fall thereof. A community, whether eccleſiaſtical or civil, conſiſteth of great numbers; but it's well-being dependeth on a few, in whoſe hands the adminiſtration is placed. When the ſalt hath loſt it's ſavour, the maſs muſt putrefy; when the light becometh darkneſs, how great muſt be that darkneſs!

6. *I have ſaid ye* are *gods, and all of you are children of the moſt High.* 7. *But ye ſhall die like men*, or, *Adam, and fall like one of the princes.*

It is true then that magiſtrates are exalted above other men; that they are dignified with a commiſſion from above; appointed to be the vicegerents of heaven upon earth; and therefore called by the name of him, in whoſe name they act. But it is likewiſe as true, that notwithſtanding all this honour conferred upon them, for the good of others, and of themſelves, if they uſe it aright, they ſtill continue to be the mortal ſons of mortal "Adam;" like him, they muſt fall and periſh; God can, at any time, caſt them down from their high eſtate, as he did the heathen "princes," who miſbehaved themſelves, and oppoſed his counſels: death certainly will ſtrip them of all their authority, and lay them low in the grave; from thence the laſt trumpet ſhall call them forth, to ſtand, with the reſt of their brethren, before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, there to take their trial, and receive their everlaſting ſentence. How neceſſary oftentimes is this conſideration, to check the ſpirit of

of tyranny and injuſtice, to qualify the pride and inſolence of office!

8. *Ariſe, O God, judge the earth: for thou ſhalt inherit all nations.*

A view of that diſorder and confuſion in which frequently the Jewiſh nation, as well as the reſt of the world, was involved, cauſed the prophets moſt earneſtly to wiſh and pray for the coming of that time, when "God" ſhould "ariſe," in the perſon of Meſſiah, to viſit and "judge the earth;" to deliver it from the powers of darkneſs, and the tyranny of ſin; to "inherit all nations," as purchaſed and redeemed by him; to eſtabliſh his church among them; and to rule with a ſceptre of righteouſneſs, in the hearts of his people. "Ariſe" yet once again, O Lord Jeſu, from thy throne, where thou ſitteſt at the right hand of the Father; "judge the earth," again corrupted and overwhelmed with iniquity; do away ſin, and put an end for ever to the power of Satan; "inherit all nations," redeemed from death, and ranſomed from the grave: and reign to eternity, King of Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Glory.

PSALM LXXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, the church 1—8. complaineth to God of the inſolence, ſubtilty, rage, and malice of her enemies, united in cloſe confederacy againſt her; 9—12. ſhe prayeth for a manifeſtation of that power, which

formerly diſcomfited John, Siſera, and the Madianites; that ſo the hoſtile nations, 13—15. made ſenſible of the ſuperiority of Iſrael's God, 16—18. might either themſelves be induced to acknowledge him, or elſe, by their deſtruction, become a warning and admonition to others. As, while the world endureth, there will be a church, and while there is a church, ſhe will have her enemies, who are to increaſe upon her as the end approacheth, this Pſalm can never be out of date. And to the ſpiritual adverſaries of his ſoul every private Chriſtian may apply it at all times.

1. *Keep not thou ſilence, O God; hold not thy peace, and be not ſtill, O God.* 2. *For lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lift up their head.*

The church intreateth God again and again to hear and help her in the day of trouble. Her enemies and haters are here ſaid to be the enemies and haters of God, becauſe Chriſt and the church, like man and wife, are one; they have one common intereſt; they have the ſame friends, and the ſame foes. To him therefore ſhe applieth, terrified by the tumultuous noiſe of confederated nations, roaring againſt her like the roaring of the ſea, and "lifting up their heads," as ſo many monſters of the deep, to devour her at once. When temptations are urgent upon the ſoul, and the paſſions riſe in arms againſt

againſt her peace and innocence, then do "the ene-"mies of God make a tumult, and they that hate "him lift up their heads;" and then is the time for her to be inſtant in prayer.

3. *They have taken crafty counſel againſt thy people, and conſulted againſt thy hidden ones.* 4. *They have ſaid, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation: that the name of Iſrael may be no more in remembrance.*

The combination, ſo much dreaded, is deſcribed as having been formed upon the beſt principles of ſecular policy, with much ſubtilty, and the moſt determinate malice, againſt the "people" of God, and his "hidden ones," that is, his peculiar nation, ſeparated from the world, and taken under the cover and protection of his wings. To root up the plantations of paradiſe, to extirpate the holy ſeed, to extinguiſh the very "name of Iſrael," was the ſcheme intended by theſe aſſociated adverſaries of Sion. Such are our ſpiritual enemies; ſuch is their cunning, their rage, and their reſolution; what prudence, what vigilance, what courage are neceſſary, that we may oppoſe them with ſucceſs?

5. *For they have conſulted together with one conſent; they are confederate againſt thee.*

When Chriſt was about to be crucified, it is obſerved by St. Luke, that "the ſame day Pilate and "Herod were made friends together; for before "they were at enmity between themſelves." Luke xxiii. 12. And however the enemies of the church may quarrel with one another, when they have nothing elſe to do, yet if a favourable opportunity offer itſelf for making an attack upon her, they lay aſide

their differences, and unite as one man; by no means refuſing the friendly aid even of infidels and atheiſts, who are always ready to join in carrying on the war againſt the common adverſary.

6. *The tabernacles of Edom, and the Iſhmaelites: of Moab, and the Hagarenes.* 7. *Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek: the Philiſtines, with the inhabitants of Tyre.* 8. *Aſſur alſo is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot.*

Theſe are the names of the confederates. The Edomites were deſcended from Eſau, that old original enemy of Jacob; the Iſhmaelites from Iſhmael, the ſon of the bond woman, and ſworn foe to Iſaac, heir of the promiſes; the Moabites ſprang from Moab, one of the inceſtuous children of Lot; the Hagarenes were other deſcendants of Hagar; who the Gebalites were, is uncertain; the Ammonites came from Ammon, the ſon of Lot, and inceſtuous brother of Moab; the Amalekites were the progeny of Amalek, the grandſon of Eſau; Gen. xxxvi. 16. the Philiſtines and Tyrians are well known; and to compleat all, Aſſur, or the power of Aſſyria, was called in by the children of Lot, the Moabites and Ammonites, to aſſiſt in the great work of exterminating Iſrael from the face of the earth. Theſe were the ten nations banded together, by a ſolemn league and covenant, againſt the people of God. And as Iſrael was the grand figure of the Chriſtian church, which is now "the Iſrael of God," ſo her enemies are often repreſented by the above recited nations, and in prophetical language are called by their names. Every age has it's Edomites, and it's Iſhmaelites,

maelites, &c. &c. The actors are changed, and the ſcenes are ſhifted; but the ſtage and the drama continue the ſame.

9. *Do unto them as* unto *the Madianites: as* to *Siſera, as* to *Jabin, at the brook of Kiſon:* 10. Which *periſhed at Endor: they became as the dung of the earth.* 11. *Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb: yea all their princes like as Zeba and Zalmunna:* 12. *Who ſaid, Let us take to ourſelves the houſes of God in poſſeſſion.*

The church, having recounted the enemies which compaſſed her about on every ſide, looks up for ſuccour to that Almighty power which had of old ſo graciouſly interpoſed on her behalf, and reſcued her from her perſecutors, in the days of Deborah, Barak, and Gideon. See Judg. iv—viii. Fully ſenſible, that thoſe deliverances were wrought by the immediate hand of Jehovah, ſhe offers the prayer of faith for a like manifeſtation of his glory, and a like victory over thoſe who intended, in the ſame manner, to ſeize and devour his inheritance. Of how great uſe and comfort are the Old Teſtament hiſtories to us, in all our afflictions!

13. *O my God, make them like a wheel*; or, *like thiſtle-down*; *as the ſtubble before the wind.* 14. *As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame ſetteth the mountains on fire*; 15. *So perſecute*, or, *thou ſhalt purſue them with thy tempeſt, and make*, or, *thou ſhalt make them afraid with thy ſtorm.*

The fate of thoſe is here predicted, who invade the inheritance of Jehovah, and ſay, "Let us take to "ourſelves the houſes of God in poſſeſſion." The inconſtancy and mutability of their fortunes is reſembled

bled to "thiſtle-down," or ſome ſuch light revolving body, and to "ſtubble" or chaff, whirled about and diſſipated by the "wind:" the ſuddenneſs, horror, and univerſality of their deſtruction are ſet forth by the ſimilitude of a "fire" conſuming the dry trees in a "foreſt," or ſome combuſtible matter on the "mountains." Such is the ſtorm and tempeſt of God's indignation, which purſues and terrifies the ſacrilegious and ungodly.

16. *Fill their faces with ſhame: that they may ſeek thy name, O Lord.* 17. *Let them*, or, *they ſhall be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them*, or, *they ſhall be put to ſhame and periſh.* 18. *That* men *may know that thou, whoſe name alone is* JEHOVAH, art *the moſt High over all the earth.*

The puniſhments inflicted by heaven upon wicked men are primarily intended to humble and convert them. If they continue incorrigible under every diſpenſation of merciful ſeverity, they are at laſt cut off, and finally deſtroyed; that others, admoniſhed by their example, may repent, and return, and give glory to God. Salutary are the afflictions which bring men, and happy the men who are brought by them, to an acknowledgment of "JEHOVAH our "Righteouſneſs," our exalted and glorified Redeemer, "the moſt High over all the earth;" whom all muſt acknowledge, and before whom all muſt appear to be judged, in the great and terrible day.

PSALM

PSALM LXXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm, for the ſubject matter of it, bears a reſemblance to the xliid. Under the figure of an Iſraelite, deprived of all acceſs to Jeruſalem and the ſanctuary, (whether it were David, when driven away by Abſalom, or any other perſon in like circumſtances, at a different time) we are preſented with 1, 2. the earneſt longing of a devout ſoul after the houſe and preſence of God; 3—7. a beautiful and paſſionate eulogy on the bleſſedneſs of his miniſters and ſervants; 8—10. a fervent prayer for a participation of that bleſſedneſs; and 11, 12. an act of faith in his power and goodneſs, which render him both able and willing to grant requeſts of this nature.

1. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O* LORD *of hoſts.*

Thus ardently doth a baniſhed Iſraelite expreſs his love for Sion, his admiration of the beauty of holineſs. Nay, Balaam himſelf, when from the top of Peor he ſaw the children of Iſrael abiding in their tents, with the Glory in the midſt of them, could not help exclaiming, "How goodly are thy tents, "O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Iſrael!" Numb. xxiv.

xxiv. 5. "How amiable," then, may the Chriſtian ſay, are thoſe eternal manſions, from whence ſin and ſorrow are excluded; how goodly that camp of the ſaints, and that beloved city, where righteouſneſs and joy reign triumphant, and peace and unity are violated no more; where thou, O bleſſed Jeſu, "Lord "of hoſts," King of men and angels, dwelleſt in glorious majeſty, conſtituting by thy preſence the felicity of thy choſen!

2. *My ſoul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the* LORD: *my heart and my fleſh crieth out*, or, *ſhouteth for the living God.*

It is ſaid of the queen of Sheba, that upon beholding the pleaſantneſs of Jeruſalem, the ſplendor of Solomon's court, and above all, the magnificence of the temple, with the ſervices therein performed, "there was no more ſpirit in her." 1 King. x. 5. What wonder, therefore, if the ſoul ſhould be affected, even to ſickneſs and fainting, while, from this land of her captivity, ſhe beholdeth, by faith, the heavenly Jeruſalem, the city and court of the great King, with all the tranſporting glories of the church triumphant: while, in her meditations, ſhe draweth the compariſon between her wretched ſtate of exile upon earth, and the unſpeakable bleſſedneſs of being delivered from temptation and affliction, and admitted into the everlaſting "courts of Jeho-"vah." Whoſe "heart and fleſh" doth not exult, and "ſhout" aloud for joy, at a proſpect of riſing from the bed of death, to dwell with "the living "God;" to ſee the face of him, "in whom is life, "and the life is the light of men?" John i. 4. Did

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the Iſraelites, from all parts of Judea, go up, with the voice of jubilee, to keep a feaſt at Jeruſalem; and ſhall Chriſtians grieve, when the time is come for them to aſcend, and to celebrate an eternal feſtival, in heaven?

3. *Yea the ſparrow hath found an houſe, and the ſwallow*, or, *ringdove a neſt for herſelf, where ſhe may lay her young*, even *thine altars, O* LORD *of hoſts, my King, and my God.*

The Pſalmiſt is generally ſuppoſed, in this verſe, to lament his unhappineſs, in being deprived of all acceſs to the tabernacle, or temple, a privilege enjoyed even by the birds, who were allowed to build their neſts in the neighbourhood of the ſanctuary. It is evidently the deſign of this paſſage to intimate to us, that in the houſe, and at the altar of God, a faithful ſoul findeth freedom from care and ſorrow, quiet of mind, and gladneſs of ſpirit; like a bird, that has ſecured a little manſion, for the reception and education of her young. And there is no heart, endued with ſenſibility, which doth not bear it's teſtimony to the exquiſite beauty and propriety of this affecting image.

4. *Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe: they will be*, or, *are ſtill praiſing thee.*

Here the metaphor is dropped, and the former ſentiment expreſſed in plain language. "Bleſſed are," not the mighty and opulent of the earth, but "they "that dwell in thy houſe," the miniſters of the eternal temple in heaven, the angels and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; their every paſſion is reſolved into love, every duty into praiſe; hallelujah ſucceeds hal-

hallelujah; "they are ſtill," ſtill, for ever, "praiſing "thee." And bleſſed, next to them, are thoſe miniſters and members of the church here below, who, in diſpoſition, as well as employment, do moſt reſemble them.

5. *Bleſſed is the man whoſe ſtrength is in thee: in whoſe heart* are *the ways* of them; Heb. *the ways are in the heart of them.*

Not only they are pronounced bleſſed, who "dwell" in the temple, but all they alſo who are "travelling" thitherward, (as the whole Jewiſh nation was wont to do, three times in a year) and who are therefore meditating on their "journey," and on the "way" which leadeth to the holy city, truſting in God to "ſtrengthen," and proſper, and conduct them to the houſe of his habitation, the place where his glory dwelleth. Such a company of ſojourners are Chriſtians, going up to the heavenly Jeruſalem; ſuch ought to be their truſt in God, and ſuch the ſubject of their thoughts.*

6. *Who paſſing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: the rain alſo filleth the pools.* 7. *They go from*

* In ejus animo verſantur ſemitæ ferentes ad templum quo properat. Morali ſenſu; Quicunque ſanctus eſt, quotidie in priora extenditur, et præteritorum obliviſcitur, cum Paulo, Phil. iii. 13. BOSSUET. Jeruſalem is repreſented in the New Teſtament as a type of heaven. I ſee nothing irrational therefore, in ſuppoſing, that the inſpired writer, in deſcribing the aſcent to Jeruſalem, might have in view alſo that ſpiritual progreſs, leading to the city which is above, the mother of us all. The words before us are certainly very applicable to the advances made, in this progreſs, from ſtrength to ſtrength, from one ſtage of Chriſtian perfection to another. MERRICK.

ſtrength

ſtrength to ſtrength, every one of them *in Zion appeareth before God*; or, *the God of gods appeareth*, i. e. to them *in Zion*.

After numberleſs uncertain conjectures offered by commentators upon the conſtruction of theſe two verſes, it ſeemeth impoſſible for us to attain to any other than a general idea of their true import; which is this, that the Iſraelites, or ſome of them, paſſed, in their way to Jeruſalem, through a valley that had the name of "Baca," a noun derived from a verb which ſignifies to "weep;" that in this valley they were refreſhed by plenty of water; that with renewed vigour they proceeded from ſtage to ſtage, until they preſented themſelves before God in Zion. The preſent world is to us this valley of weeping; in our paſſage through it, we are refreſhed by the ſtreams of divine grace, flowing down from the great fountain of conſolation; and thus are we enabled to proceed from one degree of holineſs to another, until we come to the glorified viſion of God, in heaven itſelf. Mr. Merrick's poetical verſion of this paſſage is extremely beautiful, and applies at once to the caſe of the Iſraelite, and to that of the Chriſtian.

Bleſt, who, their ſtrength on thee reclin'd,
Thy ſeat explore with conſtant mind,
And, Salem's diſtant tow'rs in view,
With active zeal their way purſue:
Secure the thirſty vale they tread,
While, call'd from out their ſandy bed,
(As down in grateful ſhow'rs diſtill'd
The heav'ns their kindlieſt moiſture yield)

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The copious ſprings their ſteps beguile,
And bid the chearleſs deſert ſmile.
From ſtage to ſtage advancing ſtill,
Behold them reach fair Sion's hill,
And proſtrate at her hallow'd ſhrine,
Adore the Majeſty divine.

8. *O* LORD *God of hoſts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob.* 9. *Behold, O God our ſhield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*

After extolling the happineſs of thoſe who dwelt in the temple, and of thoſe who had acceſs to it, the Pſalmiſt breaks forth into a moſt ardent prayer to his God, for a ſhare in that happineſs. He addreſſeth him as "the Lord of hoſts," Almighty in power; as "the God of Jacob," infinite in mercy and goodneſs to his people; as their "ſhield," the object of all their truſt, for defence and protection; and beſeecheth him to "look upon the face of his Anoint-"ed," that is, of David, if he were king of Iſrael when this Pſalm was written; or rather of Meſſiah,§ in whom God is always well pleaſed; for whoſe ſake he hath mercy upon us; through whoſe name and merits our prayers are accepted, and the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers.

10. *For a day in thy courts is better than a thouſand: I had rather be a door keeper in the houſe of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedneſs.*

One day, ſpent in meditation and devotion, affordeth a pleaſure, far, far ſuperior to that, which an age of worldly proſperity could give. Happier is the

§ "Chriſti tui:" Regis, qui Chriſti figura. BOSSUET.

leaſt

leaſt and loweſt of the ſervants of Jeſus, than the greateſt and moſt exalted potentate, who knoweth him not. And he is no proper judge of bleſſedneſs, who heſitates a moment to prefer the condition of a penitent in the porch, to that of a ſinner on the throne. If this be the caſe upon earth, how much more, in heaven? O come that one glorious day, whoſe ſun ſhall never go down, nor any cloud obſcure the luſtre of his beams; that day, when the temple of God ſhall be opened in heaven, and we ſhall be admitted to ſerve him for ever therein!

11. *For the* LORD *God is a ſun and ſhield: the* LORD *will give grace and glory: no good* thing *will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

Jeſus Chriſt is our "Lord," and our "God;" he is a "ſun," to enlighten and direct us in the way, and a "ſhield," to protect us againſt the enemies of our ſalvation; he will give, "grace" to carry us on "from ſtrength to ſtrength," and "glory" to crown us when we "appear before him in Zion;" he will "withhold" nothing that is "good" and profitable for us in the courſe of our journey, and will himſelf be our reward, when we come to the end of it.

12. *O* LORD *of hoſts, bleſſed is the man that truſteth in thee.*

While, therefore, we are ſtrangers and ſojourners here below, far from that heavenly country where we would be, in whom ſhould we truſt, to bring us to the holy city, new Jeruſalem, of which the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple, but in thee, O Saviour and Redeemer, who art the Head of every

creature, the Captain of the armies of heaven and earth, the Lord of hosts, and King of glory? "Blessed," thrice "blessed is the man that trusteth "in thee."

PSALM LXXXV.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, appointed by the church to be used on Christmas day, 1—3. celebrateth the redemption of the Israel of God from their spiritual captivity under sin and death; 4—7. teacheth us to pray for the full accomplishment of that redemption in ourselves; 8—11. describeth the incarnation of Christ, with the joyful meeting of Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, at his birth, and 12, 13. the blessed effects of his advent.

1. Lord, *thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.* 2. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin.* 3. *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned* thyself *from the fierceness of thine anger.*

These three verses speak of the deliverance from captivity, as already brought about; whereas, in the subsequent parts of the Psalm, it is prayed for and predicted, as a thing future. To account for this,

this, ſome ſuppoſe that the Pſalmiſt firſt returns thanks for a temporal redemption, and then propheſies of the ſpiritual ſalvation by Meſſiah. Others are of opinion, that the ſame eternal redemption is ſpoken of throughout, but repreſented, in the beginning of the Pſalm, as already accompliſhed in the divine decree, though the eventual completion was yet to come. The difficulty, perhaps, may be removed, by rendering theſe three firſt verſes in the preſent time; "LORD, thou art favourable to thy "land, thou bringeſt back the captivity of thy peo-"ple;" &c. that is, Thou art the God whoſe property it is to do this, and to ſhew ſuch mercy to thy people, who therefore call upon thee for the ſame. But, indeed, to us Chriſtians, who now uſe the Pſalm, the difference is not material; ſince a part of our redemption is paſt, and a part of it is yet to come, for the haſtening of which latter we daily pray. God hath already been exceedingly gracious and "favourable" to the whole "earth," in "bringing "back," by the reſurrection of Jeſus, the ſpiritual "captivity of" his people; he hath himſelf, in Chriſt, "borne," and ſo taken away, "the iniquity "of his people;" he hath, "covered all their ſins," that they ſhould no more appear in judgment againſt them: propitiated by the Son of his love, he hath removed his "wrath," and "turned himſelf from "the fierceneſs of his anger." So exactly and literally do theſe words deſcribe the means and method of Goſpel ſalvation, that a Chriſtian can hardly affix any other ideas to them.

4. *Turn us, O God of our ſalvation, and cauſe thine anger towards us to ceaſe.* 5. *Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?* 6. *Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?* 7. *Shew us thy mercy, O* LORD, *and grant us thy ſalvation.*

The antient church is here introduced as petitioning for the continuation and completion of thoſe bleſſings which had been mentioned in the foregoing verſes, namely, that God would "turn" his people from their captivity, and "cauſe his anger towards "them to ceaſe;" that he would "revive" them from ſin and ſorrow, and give them occaſion to "rejoice "in him," their mighty deliverer; that he would "ſhew them" openly that "mercy" of which they had ſo often heard, and "grant them that ſalvation," or that "Saviour," that JESUS, who had been ſo long promiſed to mankind. And although it be true, that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, and hath virtually procured all theſe bleſſings for the church, yet do "we" ſtill continue to pray, in the ſame words, for the actual application of them all to ourſelves, by the converſion of our hearts, the juſtification of our perſons, the ſanctification of our ſouls, and the glorification of our bodies. For this laſt bleſſing of redemption, "the whole creation waiteth, groaning, and "travailing in pain together, UNTIL NOW." Rom. viii. 22.

8. *I will hear what God the* LORD *will ſpeak: for he will ſpeak peace unto his people, and to his ſaints; but let them not turn again to folly*; or, *that they may not turn again to folly.*

The

The prophet having prayed, in the name of the church, that Jehovah would "ſhew them his mercy, "and grant them his ſalvation," declares himſelf reſolved, concerning this "ſalvation to enquire and "ſearch diligently, what, or what manner of time "the Spirit of Chriſt which was in him did ſignify, "when it teſtified before-hand the coming of Chriſt, "and the glory that ſhould follow:" See 1 Pet. i. 10. he would attend to "what God the LORD, "ſhould ſay," and report it to the world. Now, what was the meſſage, which the prophets had commiſſion to deliver from God, but that he would "ſpeak peace," or reconciliation through a Saviour, "to his people, and to his ſaints?" The Goſpel is accordingly ſtyled by St. Peter, "the word which "God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching "peace by Jeſus Chriſt." Acts x. 36. And what was the end of this reconciliation between God and men, but that men ſhould become, and continue the ſervants of God; that, being waſhed from their ſins by the blood of Chriſt, and renewed in their minds by the grace of Chriſt, they ſhould walk in the paths of wiſdom and holineſs, and "turn not again to the "folly" they had renounced?

9. *Surely his ſalvation* is *nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.*

God, who "calleth things that be not as though "they were," teacheth his prophets to do likewiſe. The Pſalmiſt therefore ſpeaks with aſſurance of the "Saviour," as if he then ſaw him before his eyes, healing, by the word of his power, the bodies and the ſouls of men upon earth, and manifeſting forth

his "glory," in human nature, to all ſuch as, with an holy "fear," and filial reverence, believed on him. St. John himſelf hardly uſeth plainer language when he ſaith, "The Word was made fleſh, and dwelt, "or tabernacled among us: and we beheld his glo-"ry, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, "full of grace and truth." John i. 14. The body of Chriſt was the true "tabernacle, or, temple;" his Divinity was the GLORY which reſided there, and filled that holy place. The church is his myſtical "body;" by his Spirit he now and ever "dwelleth "in our land; and his ſalvation is always nigh them "that fear him;" as ſaith the holy virgin in her ſong, "His mercy is on them that fear him, throughout "all generations."

10. *Mercy and truth are met together: righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other.* 11. *Truth ſhall ſpring out of the earth; and righteouſneſs ſhall look down from heaven.*

Theſe four divine attributes parted at the fall of Adam, and met again at the birth of Chriſt. Mercy was ever inclined to ſerve man, and Peace could not be his enemy; but Truth exacted the performance of God's threat, "The ſoul that ſinneth it ſhall "die;" and Righteouſneſs could not but give to every one his due. Jehovah muſt be true in all his ways, and righteous in all his works. Now there is no religion upon earth, except the Chriſtian, which can ſatisfy the demands of all theſe claimants, and reſtore an union between them; which can ſhew how God's word can be true, and his work juſt, and the ſinner, notwithſtanding, find mercy, and obtain peace.

peace. Mahomet's prayer, were it the prayer of a righteous man and a prophet, could not ſatisfy divine juſtice; the blood of bulls and goats was always inſufficient for that purpoſe, being a figure only for the time then preſent, which ceaſed of courſe when the reality appeared. "Sacrifice and burnt offering "thou wouldeſt not; then ſaid I, lo I come." A God incarnate reconciled all things in heaven and earth. When Chriſt appeared in our nature, the promiſe was fulfilled, and "Truth ſprang out of the "earth." And now, Righteouſneſs, "looking down "from heaven," beheld in him every thing that ſhe required; an undefiled birth, an holy life, an innocent death; a ſpirit and a mouth without guile, a ſoul and a body without ſin. She ſaw, and was ſatisfied, and returned to earth. Thus all the four parties met again, in perfect harmony: Truth ran to Mercy and embraced her; Righteouſneſs to Peace, and kiſſed her. And this could only happen at the birth of Jeſus, in whom "the tender Mercy of "our God viſited us, and who is the Truth; who "is made unto us Righteouſneſs, and who is our "Peace." See Luke i. 78. John xiv. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30. Epheſ. ii. 14. Thoſe that are thus joined, as attributes, in Chriſt, ought not, as virtues, to be ſeparated in a Chriſtian, who may learn how to reſemble his bleſſed Lord and Maſter, by obſerving that ſhort, but compleat rule of life, comprehended in the few following words; Shew Mercy, and ſpeak Truth; do Righteouſneſs, and follow Peace. See St. Bernard, in his Sermon on the Annunciation,

and, from him, Biſhop Andrews on theſe two verſes of our Pſalm. *

12. *Yea, the* LORD *ſhall give* that which is *good: and our land ſhall yield her increaſe.*

Unleſs God vouchſafe a gracious rain from above, the earth cannot "yield her increaſe." The effects of the incarnation of Chriſt, the deſcent of the Spirit, and the publication of the Goſpel among men, are frequently ſet forth in Scripture under images borrowed from that fruitfulneſs cauſed in the earth by the rain of heaven. Thus Iſaiah, "Drop down ye "heavens from above, and let the ſkies pour down "righteouſneſs; let the earth open, and let them "bring forth ſalvation, and let righteouſneſs ſpring "up together. xiv. 8. I will pour water upon him "that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I "will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing "upon thine offspring. And they ſhall ſpring up as "among the graſs, as willows by the water courſes. "xliv. 3. As the rain cometh down from heaven, "and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth "and bud; ſo ſhall my word be," &c. lv. 10. Give us evermore, O Lord, "that which is good, that "our land may yield her increaſe;" give us that good gift, the gift of thy Spirit, that we be "neither "barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt." 2 Pet. i. 8.

* Solutâ captivitate, felicem populi ſtatum deſignat, omni bonorum copiâ et virtutibus florentis; quæ maximè impleta ſunt, poſtquam Chriſtus ipſa veritas, idemque pax noſtra, è terrâ ortus eſt. BOSSUET.

13. *Righteouſneſs*

13. *Righteouſneſs ſhall go before him, and ſhall ſet* us *in the way of his ſteps*; or, *and ſhall ſet his ſteps in the way.*

Upon the appearance of the Redeemer, "Righ-"teouſneſs" is repreſented "as going before him," like his harbinger the Baptiſt, to prepare and make ready his way. In that way, the way of righteouſneſs, "he ſet his ſteps," and walked therein, without the leaſt deviation, until he had finiſhed his appointed courſe. Draw us, bleſſed Jeſu, and we will run after thee, in the path of life; let thy mercy pardon us, thy truth enlighten us, thy righteouſneſs direct us, to follow thee, O Lamb of God, whitherſoever thou goeſt, through poverty, affliction, perſecution, and death itſelf; that our portion may be for ever in thy kingdom of peace and love.

XVII DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm is entitled, A prayer of David, and ſuppoſed to have been written in ſome of his great diſtreſſes. Like others of the ſame kind, it is calculated for the uſe of the church, during her ſufferings here below, by which ſhe is conformed to the image of the true David, that man of ſorrows. It contains, 1. an earneſt ſupplication, grounded

on

on the poverty, 2. the holineſs, faith, 3. importunity, and 4. devotion, of the ſuppliant; and on 5—7. the goodneſs, and 8. power of God, 9, 10. to be one day acknowledged by all nations, at their converſion. After this follows, 11. a petition for wiſdom, ſtrength, and ſingleneſs of heart; 12, 13. a thankſgiving for redemption; 14. a complaint of perſecution from the wicked; 15, an act of faith; 16, 17. a prayer for help and ſalvation.

1. *Bow down thine ear,* O LORD, *and hear me: for I am poor and needy.*

All prayer is founded on a ſenſe of our own wants, and God's ability to ſupply them. In the ſight of his Maker, every ſinner is "poor and needy;" and he muſt become ſo in his own, that his petitions may be regarded; he muſt pray, with the humility and importunity of a ſtarving beggar, at the gate of heaven, if he expect the great King to "bow down his "ear, and hear him. The prayer of the humble," ſaith the wiſe ſon of Sirach, "pierceth the clouds; "and till it come nigh, he will not be comforted; "and will not depart till the moſt High ſhall behold." Eccluſ. xxxv. 17. The bleſſed Jeſus, "though he "was rich, yet for our ſakes became poor, and had "not where to lay his head;" nor is it to be doubted, but that in his ſtate of humiliation, he oftentimes made his prayer to the Father in theſe very words; "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, and hear me; for "I am

"I am poor and needy." If he ſued, in ſuch a form of words, for us, ſhall we think of ſuing in any other form, for ourſelves?

2. *Preſerve thou my ſoul, for I* am *holy: O thou my God ſave thy ſervant, that truſteth in thee.*

The word here tranſlated "holy," is חסיד the ſame which is uſed in the xvith Pſalm; "Thou ſhalt not "ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee corruption." And indeed, if we underſtand "holineſs" in it's ſtrict ſenſe, no one but "he whom the Father ſanctified, "and ſent into the world," to redeem loſt man, could ſay to him, "Preſerve my ſoul, for I am holy." But the word properly ſignifies, "good, merciful, pious, "devoted to the ſervice of God," &c. The Chriſtian, therefore, only pleads, in this expreſſion, his relation to Chriſt, as being a member of Chriſt's body, the church, and a partaker of the gifts, which, by virtue of that memberſhip, he has received, through the Spirit of holineſs. So that this firſt part of the verſe, "Preſerve my ſoul, for I am holy," when repeated by us, is equivalent to another paſſage in the Pſalms, "I am THINE, O ſave me." cxix. 94. The latter member of the verſe under conſideration teaches us to pray for help and ſalvation, as the "ſervants" of God, whoſe eyes therefore look naturally to him, "as the eyes of ſervants," in affliction, "look unto the hand of their maſters." Pſ. cxxiii. 2. And happy, ſurely, are we in a maſter, who, himſelf, for our ſalvation, once lived, and prayed, and ſuffered, and died, in "the form of a ſervant." Phil. ii. 7.

3. *Be*

3. *Be merciful unto me,* O LORD, *for I cry unto thee daily.*

There is no man upon the earth, but needeth "mercy;" he who is truly ſenſible of his need, will "cry daily" for it; and he who doth ſo, may comfort himſelf with hope of obtaining it. The prayers of Jeſus, poured forth for the ſalvation of his myſtical body, in the days of his fleſh, were frequent and mighty; his interceſſion for us in heaven is continual. Does the man believe this, who prays not at all, or who prays without devotion?

4. *Rejoice the ſoul of thy ſervant: for unto thee,* O LORD, *do I lift up my ſoul.*

Sorrow was the portion of Chriſt in this world, and the church hath no reaſon to expect any other from it. He that would have real "joy" in his heart, muſt beſeech God to give it him, for no creature hath it to give. Nay, the love of the world muſt be renounced, before this divine gift can even be "received." The affections muſt be looſened from earth, and "lifted up" to heaven, on the wings of faith and love; for in the ſoul that is full of ſenſual pleaſures and indulgences, there is neither room nor taſte for ſpiritual delights.

5. *For thou,* LORD, *art good, and ready to forgive: and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

We are encouraged to "lift up our ſouls to God" in prayer, becauſe his "goodneſs" and the "plenteouſneſs of his mercy" in Chriſt Jeſus incline him to give his holy Spirit of peace and comfort to "all that call upon him." His favour is no longer con-

confined to Judea; there is now no diſtinction of age, condition, or country: but the ſinner, whoever or wherever he be, if he call upon the ſaving name of Jeſus, is heard, pardoned, and accepted, upon the terms of the evangelical covenant.

6. *Give ear, O* LORD, *unto my prayer: and attend to the voice of my ſupplications.* 7. *In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt anſwer me.*

In confidence of an "anſwer," nouriſhed and ſtrengthened by all the foregoing conſiderations, the ſuppliant renews his prayer, while "the day of trou-"ble" laſts; and that day will not end, but with this mortal pilgrimage; ſince he who loves his country, will ever be uneaſy, while he is detained among ſtrangers and enemies, perils and temptations. But the trouble is overpaid with profit, which rendereth us adepts in the practice of devotion, which convinceth us that we are abroad, and maketh us to wiſh and ſigh for our true and only home.

8. *Among the gods* there is *none like unto thee, O* LORD; *neither* are there any works *like unto thy works.*

Another reaſon why application ſhould be made to Jehovah, is his infinite ſuperiority over all thoſe, that, by infatuated men, were ever called "gods." From the antient idolatry, which taught adoration to the ſun, moon, and ſtars, to the light and the air, we have been delivered by the Goſpel; nor do we any longer profeſs to worſhip Jupiter, and the other heathen gods and goddeſſes: but do not many ſtill truſt in idols, and have they not, in effect, other objects of worſhip, from whoſe hands they expect their reward?

reward? Are not the hearts of the covetous, the ambitious, the voluptuous, ſo many temples of Mammon, or Plutus; of Jupiter, or Mars; of Bacchus, Comus, and Venus? But what are theſe deities; what is their power; and what are their gifts? What is the whole world, and all that is therein, when compared with it's Maker and Redeemer; what is it, when applied to, for the eaſe and comfort of a wounded ſpirit?—"Among the gods "there is none like unto thee, O LORD; neither are "there any works like unto thy works!"

9. *All nations whom thou haſt made, ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O* LORD, *and ſhall glorify thy name.*

The Pſalmiſt predicteth, that this ſuperiority of Jehovah ſhould one day be acknowledged throughout all the earth, when "neither in Jeruſalem only, nor "in the mount of the Samaritans," but in every place, "ſhould men worſhip the Father;" John iv. 21. when he who "made all nations" by his Son, ſhould by that Son redeem all nations, bringing them from the world to the Church, there to "worſhip be-"fore" the true God, and in ſongs of praiſe to glo-"rify his holy name." If in theſe our times, we behold the nations again falling away from God, departing from the purity of their faith, and leaving their firſt love, let us comfort ourſelves with looking forward to that ſcene of things deſcribed by St. John, in which we hope to bear a part hereafter. "I be-"held, and lo, a great multitude, which no man "could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and "people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and

"before

"before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and "palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, "saying, Salvation unto our God which ſitteth upon "the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. vii. 9.

10. *For thou* art *great, and doeſt wondrous things: thou art God alone.*

"Great" is Jehovah in his power, in his wiſdom, in his mercy; "wonderful" in the creation of the world, wonderful in the preſervation and the government of it, wonderful in it's redemption; wonderful in the incarnation, life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Jeſus, in the deſcent of the Spirit, the propagation of the Goſpel, the ſufferings of ſaints, and the converſion of ſinners; moſt wonderful will he be, when he ſhall raiſe the dead, judge the world, condemn the wicked, and glorify the righteous. And then ſhall every tongue confeſs, "Thou art God "alone!"

11. *Teach me thy way,* O LORD; *I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*

It is the continual ſubject of the Mediator's interceſſion above, and of our prayers below, that we may be "taught the way of Jehovah," the way to life eternal, prepared for us, through faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus; that being ſo taught, we may likewiſe be enabled "to walk in the truth," without error in doctrine, or deviation from duty; believing all things which God hath revealed, and doing whatſoever he hath commanded us; that the affections of the "heart" may be withdrawn from other objects, and being no longer divided between God

God and the world, become "united" in the filial "fear of his name," as the grand principle of action.

12. *I will praiſe thee, O* LORD *my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.* 13. *For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou haſt delivered my ſoul from the loweſt hell.*

Gratitude for mercies already received, will obtain a continuance and increaſe of thoſe mercies. The church is never in ſo afflicted a ſtate, but ſhe hath ſtill reaſon to intermingle hallelujahs with her hoſannas, and in the midſt of her moſt fervent prayers, to "praiſe the LORD her God, with all her "heart, and to glorify his name for evermore;" ſince, whatever ſhe may ſuffer upon earth (and even thoſe ſufferings will turn to her advantage) "great," moſt undoubtedly, "hath his mercy been toward "her, in delivering" her, by the reſurrection of Jeſus, from the bondage of ſin, the dominion of death, and the bottomleſs pit of "hell."

14. *O God, the proud are riſen againſt me, and the aſſemblies of violent men have ſought after my ſoul, and have not ſet thee before their eyes.*

From praiſes we return again to prayers. When Chriſt was upon earth, we know the treatment he met with from "proud and violent men, who had "not ſet God before their eyes;" from ſelf-righteous Jews, and conceited Gentiles, who roſe up, and took counſel together againſt him. What his church afterwards ſuffered at the hands of the ſame enemies, is likewiſe well known. How much more ſhe is to undergo in the latter days, we know not as yet; but this we do know, that the ſpirit of the world ſtands,

now

now and ever, in oppoſition to the ſpirit of God; it's deſign is always the ſame, although it's methods of working be divers. Nor can we be ignorant of thoſe domeſtic adverſaries, that aſſembly of haughty and turbulent paſſions, which are continually making inſurrections, and deſtroying the peace of the ſoul. So that either from without, or from within, every one, who is a Chriſtian in deed, ſhall be ſure to have his portion of tribulation.

15. *But thou, O* LORD, *art a God full of compaſſion, and gracious: long ſuffering, and plenteous in goodneſs and truth.*

Having taken a view of thoſe that are againſt us, it is now time to look up to thoſe that are with us. And can we have better friends, than all theſe gracious and favourable attributes of heaven? Can more comfortable and joyful tidings be brought us, than that God loveth us with a father's love; that he is ready to pardon, ſlow to anger; and that we have his truth pledged for the performance of his mercy? What a fountain of conſolation is here opened for the afflicted Chriſtian! "Let him drink, and "forget his poverty, and remember his miſery no "more." Prov. xxxi. 7.

16. *O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy ſtrength unto thy ſervant, and ſave the ſon of thine handmaid.*

On the conſideration of the abovementioned attributes, a petition is in this verſe put up to God, that he would "turn" his face towards us; that he would of his "mercy" pardon us, by his grace "ſtrengthen" us, and by his power "ſave" us from

all our adverſaries. Every Chriſtian is the "ſervant" of God, and "the ſon of his handmaid," the church, which may ſay, in the ſame ſpirit of humility and obedience, with the bleſſed virgin, "Behold the "handmaid of the Lord."

17. *Shew me a token for good, that they which hate me may ſee it, and be aſhamed; becauſe thou,* LORD, *haſt holpen me, and comforted me.*

Many outward "ſigns" and "tokens" of the divine favour were in old time vouchſafed to patriarchs, prophets, and kings of Iſrael. The law itſelf was a collection of external and ſacramental figures of grace and mercy. All theſe centered and had their accompliſhment in that grand and everlaſting ſign and token of God's love to man, the incarnation of Chriſt, which all faithful people from the beginning wiſhed and prayed for. On this ſign the Chriſtian looks with joy, as the great proof that God has "hol-"pen him and comforted him;" while his faith in it doth not fail, he hath the witneſs in himſelf, and his actions declare as much to all around him; "that "they which hate him may be aſhamed" and converted, before that day come, when ſhame ſhall be fruitleſs, and converſion impoſſible.

PSALM LXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet 1—3. celebrates the ſtability and felicity of Sion; 4, 5. foretels the acceſſion of the Gentiles to her, and 6. their enroll-

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ment among her citizens; 7. extols her as the fountain of grace and ſalvation. The Pſalm was probably penned, on a ſurvey of the city of David, juſt after the buildings of it were finiſhed.

1. *His foundation is in the holy mountains:* or, *It is his*, i. e. God's *foundation in the mountains of holineſs!** 2. *The* LORD *loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*

The Pſalmiſt, after having meditated on the ſtrength, the beauty, and the glory of Jeruſalem, being ſmitten with love of the holy city, and imagining the thoughts of his hearers, or readers, to have been employed on the ſame ſubject, breaks forth at once in this abrupt manner; "It is HIS foundation "on the holy mountains." By "the holy moun- "tains" are meant thoſe hills of Judea, which Jehovah had choſen, and ſeparated to himſelf from all others, whereon to conſtruct the highly favoured city and temple. As the dwellings of Jacob, in the promiſed land, were beloved by him more than the dwellings of other nations, ſo he "loved the gates "of Sion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Jeruſalem was exalted and fortified by it's ſituation; but much more ſo by the protection of the Almighty. What Jeruſalem was, the Chriſtian Church

* Some commentators ſuppoſe this verſe to be a part of the title, which will then run thus; "For the ſons of Korah, a "Pſalm; a ſong, when he laid the foundation on the holy "mountains."

is; "built" by God "on the foundations of the "Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being "the chief corner ſtone; in whom all the building, "fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy tem-"ple in the Lord." Epheſ. ii. 20. "it is HIS foun-"dation in the holy mountains;" ſhe is beloved of God above the kingdoms and empires of the earth, which riſe and fall only to fulfil the divine counſels concerning her. When thoſe counſels ſhall be fulfilled, in the ſalvation of all believers, the world, which ſubſiſts only for their ſake, will be at an end.

3. *Glorious things are ſpoken of thee, thou city of God.* As the prophet began, in a rapture, to ſpeak of the holy city, ſo now, in freſh tranſport, he changes the perſon, and ſuddenly addreſſes himſelf to it. The old Jeruſalem was "the city of God, and glorious "things were therefore ſaid of it" by the Spirit. Pleaſant for ſituation, and magnificent in it's buildings, it was the delight of nations, the joy of the whole earth; there was the royal reſidence of the kings of Judah; there was the temple, and the ark, and the glory, and the King of heaven dwelling in the midſt of her; her ſtreets were honoured with the footſteps of the Redeemer of men; there he preached, and wrought his miracles, lived, died, and roſe again; thither he ſent down the Spirit, and there he firſt laid the foundations of his church. To know what "glorious things" are ſaid of the NEW Jeruſalem, the reader muſt peruſe Iſai. lx. and Rev. xxi. xxii.

4. *I will make mention of Rahab*, or, *Egypt, and Babylon, to them that know me: Behold, Philiſtia, and Tyre,*

Tyre, with Ethiopia, or, *Arabia, this man was born there.* 5. *And of Sion it ſhall be ſaid, This and that man was born in her; and the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.*

The acceſſion of the nations to the church is generally ſuppoſed to be here predicted. God declares by his prophet, "I will make mention of," or "cauſe to be remembered, Egypt and Babylon," the old enemies of Iſrael, "to" or "among them "that know me," that is, in the number of my worſhippers; "Behold" alſo "Philiſtia, and Tyre, "with Arabia;" theſe are become mine; "this," or each of theſe, "is born there," i. e. in the city of God; they are become children of God, and citizens of Sion; ſo that "of Sion," or the church, "it ſhall be ſaid, This and that man," Heb. "a "man and a man*," i. e. great numbers of men in ſucceſſion, "are born in her;" alluding to the multitudes of converts under the Goſpel, the ſons of that Jeruſalem, "which is the mother of us all;" Gal. iv. 26. "and the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh

* Dr. Durell renders אישׁ ואישׁ "The man, even the man," that is, "the man of men;" or "The greateſt of all men." The reduplication, he thinks, according to the oriental phraſeology, muſt mean the ſuperlative, or higheſt degree. He adds—According to this interpretation, every one will ſee who this eminent perſonage was to be, from whoſe birth Zion (uſed by a ſynecdoche for Judea) was to acquire ſo much glory. The latter Hemiſtic—"And the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her" —ſeems to me to have reference, not to God the Father, but to his Son; it appearing to be exegetical of the preceding one, and to deſcribe his Divine, as the other does his human nature. CRITICAL REMARKS, p. 167.

"her;" as he ſaith, "Upon this rock will I build "my church, and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail "againſt it." Matt. xvi. 18.

6. *The* LORD *ſhall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.*

In the book of life, that regiſter of heaven, kept by God himſelf, our names are entered, not as born of fleſh and blood by the will of man, but as born of water and the ſpirit by the will of God; of each perſon it is written, "that he was born there," in the church and city of God. That is the only birth which we ought to value ourſelves upon, becauſe that alone gives us our title to "the inheritance of "the ſaints in light. In Jeſus Chriſt there is neither "Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, "barbarian, Scythian," noble or ignoble, "bond "or free; but Chriſt is all, and in all." Col. iii. 11.†

7. *As well the ſingers as the players on inſtruments ſhall be there; all my ſprings are in thee.*

The literal verſion of the words, as Dr. Chandler obſerves, ſeems to be—"Cantantes erunt, ſicut cho-"ream ducentes: omnes fontes mei in te." They ſhall ſing like thoſe who lead up the dance," i. e. moſt joyfully; ſinging and dancing frequently accompanying one another. And the burden of the ſong, thus joyfully ſung in praiſe of Sion, was to

† Dr. Durell thinks the verſe relates to the pedigree of our Lord, recorded among the Jews, and given us by the Evangeliſts—"The Lord will have this recorded, in "regiſtering the "people, that HE," the איש האיש mentioned above, "was born "there."

be

be this; "All my ſprings," or fountains, "are in "thee." And if ſuch be indeed the incomparable excellence of the church, and ſuch the benefits of her communion, as they have been ſet forth in the foregoing verſes, what anthem better deſerves to be performed by all her choirs? In thee, O Sion, is the fountain of ſalvation, and from thee are derived all thoſe ſprings of grace, which flow, by the divine appointment, while the world laſts, for the purification and refreſhment of mankind upon earth.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm, as Mr. Mudge obſerves, may well be ſaid to be compoſed, according to it's title, לענות to create detection, to raiſe a penſive gloom or melancholy in the mind; the whole ſubject of it being quite throughout heavy, and full of the moſt diſmal complaints. The nature and degree of the ſufferings related in it; the ſtrength of the expreſſions uſed to deſcribe them; the conſent of ancient expoſitors; the appointment of the Pſalm by the church to be read on Good Friday; all theſe circumſtances concur in directing an application of the whole to our bleſſed Lord. His unexampled ſorrows, both in body and ſoul; his deſertion in the day of trouble; his bitter paſſion, and approaching

death; with his frequent and fervent prayers for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, for the ſalvation of the church through him, and for the manifeſtation of God's glory; theſe are the particulars treated of in this inſtructive and moſt affecting compoſition.*

1. *O* Lord *God of my ſalvation, I have cried day and night before thee:* 2. *Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry.*

We hear in theſe words the voice of our ſuffering Redeemer. As man, he addreſſeth himſelf to his Father, "the Lord God of his ſalvation," from whom he expected, according to the promiſes, a joyful and triumphant reſurrection: he pleadeth the fervency and importunity of his prayers, offered up continually, "day and night," during the time of his humiliation and ſufferings; and he intreateth to be heard in theſe his ſupplications for his body myſtical, as well as his body natural; for himſelf, and for us all.

3. *For my ſoul is full of troubles; and my life draweth nigh to the grave.*

Is not this exactly parallel to what he ſaid in the garden, "My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto

* Cum Pſalmis xxii et lxix ad omnia convenit Pſalmus lxxxviii, quod argumento eſt, eum eodem modo a nobis eſſe explicandum. Continet igitur pariter orationem Chriſti ad Patrem e cruce fuſam. Auctor hujus Cantici non alium in finem illi titulum dedit משכיל "erudientis," quam ut Eccleſia poſteriorum temporum ex eo diſceret ultima hæc Meſſiæ fata. Vitringa Obſervat. Sacr. Lib. II. Cap. ix.

"death?

"death? Full," indeed, "of troubles" was thy "ſoul," O bleſſed Jeſus, in that dreadful hour, when, under the united weight of our ſins and ſorrows, thou wert ſinking into the "grave," in order to raiſe us out of it. Let us judge of thy love by thy ſufferings, and of both by the impoſſibility of our fully comprehending either.

4. *I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no ſtrength.*

Next to the troubles of Chriſt's ſoul, are mentioned the diſgrace and ignominy to which he ſubmitted. He who was the fountain of immortality, he from whom no one could take his life, who could in a moment have commanded twelve legions of angels to his aid, or have cauſed heaven and earth, at a word ſpeaking, to fly away before him, he was "counted with them that go down into the pit;" he died, to all appearance, like the reſt of mankind; nay, he was forcibly put to death, as a malefactor; and ſeemed, in the hands of his executioners, "as a "man that had no ſtrength," no power, or might, to help and to ſave himſelf. "His ſtrength went "from him; he became weak, and like another "man." The people ſhook their heads at him, ſaying, "He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave."

5. *Free among the dead, like the ſlain that lie in the grave, whom thou remembereſt no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.*

"Free among the dead;" that is, ſet at liberty, or diſmiſſed from the world, and ſeparated from all communication with it's affairs, as dead bodies are; "like" other "corpſes that lie in the grave, whom

"thou

"thou remembereſt no more," i. e. as living objects of providence upon earth; in this ſenſe, "they are "cut off from God's hand," which held and ſupported them in life. And in no other ſenſe can theſe expreſſions be underſtood; ſince to imagine that the Pſalmiſt, who ſo often ſpeaks in plain terms of the reſurrection, ſhould here, when perſonating Meſſiah, deny that doctrine, would be a conceit equally abſurd and impious.

6. *Thou haſt laid me in the loweſt pit, in darkneſs, in the deeps.* 7. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou haſt afflicted me with all thy waves.*

The ſufferings of Jeſus are repreſented by his being plunged into a dark and horrible abyſs, with the indignation of God, due to our ſins, reſting upon him, and all the waves of affliction rolling over him. The ſame image is uſed in Pſ. lxix. and many other places.

8. *Thou haſt put away mine acquaintance far from me: thou haſt made me an abomination to them: I am ſhut up, and I cannot come forth.*

At the apprehenſion of Chriſt, "All his diſciples "forſook him and fled" Matt. xxvi. 56. Peter denied and adjured his Maſter, as if his acquaintance had been a diſgrace, and "an abomination:" at the crucifixion, it is obſerved by St. Luke, that "all "his acquaintance ſtood afar off, beholding theſe "things;" xxiii. 49. beholding the innocent victim environed by his enemies, and at length "ſhut up" in the ſepulchre. The day muſt come, when each perſon, who reads this, ſhall be forſaken by the whole world; when relations, friends, and acquaintance

tance ſhall all retire, unable to afford him any help and aſſiſtance; when he muſt die, and be confined in the priſon of the grave, no more to "come forth," until that great Eaſter of the world, the general reſurrection. In the ſolitary and awful hour of our departure hence, let us remember to think on the deſertion, the death, the burial, and the reſurrection of our Redeemer.

9. *Mine eye mourneth by reaſon of affliction:* LORD, *I have called daily upon thee, I have ſtretched out my hands unto thee.*

This verſe contains a reiteration of the complaint and prayer made at the beginning of the Pſalm. Theſe are ſome of the "ſtrong cryings with tears," which, during the courſe of his interceſſions for us upon earth, the Son of God poured forth, "in the "days of his fleſh." Heb. v. 7.

10. *Wilt thou ſhew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead riſe and praiſe thee?* 11. *Shall thy loving kindneſs be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulneſs in deſtruction?* 12. *Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteouſneſs in the land of forgetfulneſs?*

It hath been ſometimes thought, that theſe verſes imply a denial, or at leaſt a doubt of the reſurrection from the dead; whereas they contain, in reality, the moſt powerful plea that Chriſt himſelf, in his prayers to the Father, could urge for it; namely, that, otherwiſe, man would be deprived of his ſalvation, and God of the glory thence accruing. "Wilt thou ſhew "wonders to the dead," while they continue in that ſtate; or if thou ſhouldeſt, will they be ſenſible of thoſe wonders, and make thee due returns of thankfulneſs?

fulneſs? "Shall the dead riſe up" in the congregation, "and praiſe thee?" Muſt they not live again to do that? "Shall thy loving kindneſs" to the ſons "of Adam, in me their Redeemer, be declared," ſhall the Goſpel be preached, "in the grave?" "Or "thy faithfulneſs," in accompliſhing the promiſes concerning this loving kindneſs, ſhall it be manifeſted "in that deſtruction" wrought by death upon the bodies of men? "Shall thy wonders," the wonders of light, and life, and ſalvation, "be known in the "dark" tomb? "And thy righteouſneſs," which characteriſes all thy diſpenſations, ſhall it be remembered and proclaimed "in the land" of ſilence and "forgetfulneſs?" A Chriſtian, upon the bed of ſickneſs, may undoubtedly plead with God, in this manner, for a longer continuance of life, to glorify him here upon earth. But every reſpite of that kind can be only temporary. All men, ſooner or later, muſt die; and then they can never more experience the mercies, or ſing the praiſes of God, unleſs they riſe again. So that if the argument hold in one caſe, it certainly holdeth ſtill ſtronger in the other.

13. *But unto thee have I cried,* O LORD, *and in the morning ſhall my prayer prevent me.* 14. LORD, *why caſteth thou off my ſoul? Why hideſt thou thy face from me.*

Since therefore the wonders, the loving kindneſs, the faithfulneſs, and the righteouſneſs of God cannot be manifeſted by man's redemption, if Meſſiah be left under the dominion of death, he redoubles his prayers for the promiſed deliverance; and ſpeaks of his redemption in the hour of ſorrow, as in Pſ. xxii.

xxii. 1. "My God, my God, why haſt thou for-
"ſaken me," &c.

15. I am *afflicted and ready to die from my youth up:* while *I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted;* Heb. *I am diſtreſſed, not knowing which way to turn myſelf.** 16. *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off.* 17. *They came round about me daily like water; they compaſſed me about together.*

We are not to imagine that the holy Jeſus ſuffered for us only at Gethſemane, and on mount Calvary. His whole life was one continued paſſion; a ſcene of labour and ſorrow, of contradiction and perſecution; "he was afflicted," as never man was, "from his "youth up," from the hour of his birth, when, thruſt out from the ſociety of men, he made his bed in the ſtable at Bethlehem; he was "ready to die;" a victim deſtined and prepared for that death, which, by anticipation, he taſted of through life; he ſaw the flaming ſword of God's "fierce wrath" waiting to "cut him off" from the land of the living; the "terrors" of the Almighty ſet themſelves in array againſt him, threatening, like the mountainous waves of a tempeſtuous ſea, to overwhelm his amazed ſoul. Let not the church be offended, or deſpond, but rather let her rejoice in her ſufferings, by which, through every period of her exiſtence, from youth to age, ſhe "filleth up that which is behind of the "afflictions of Chriſt," who ſuffers and will be glo-

* Dominus ipſe de ſe, Pſ. lxxxviii. 16. "Fero terrores tuos; "animi linquor." Loquitor de extremis ſuis angoribus, et doloribus. VITRINGA in Jeſai. ii. 667.

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rified in his people, as he hath already ſuffered and been glorified for them. See Col. i. 24.

18. *Lover and friend haſt thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkneſs.*

It is mentioned again, as a moſt affecting circumſtance of Chriſt's paſſion, that he was entirely forſaken, and left all alone, in that dreadful day. The bitter cup was preſented, filled to the brim, and he drank it off, to the dregs. No man could ſhare in thoſe ſufferings, by which all other men were to be redeemed. His "lovers and friends," his diſciples and acquaintance, "were put far from him;" they all "forſook him, and fled," to hide themſelves from the fury of the Jews, "in darkneſs, in dark, i. e. "ſecret places." Thus it is written in the Pſalms, and thus in the Goſpels it is recorded to have happened. Oftentimes, O bleſſed Jeſu, do we forſake thee; but do not thou forſake us, or take thy holy Spirit from us.

XVII day. Evening Prayer.

PSALM LXXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm is appointed by the church to be read on Chriſtmas Day. It celebrates. ver. 1—4. the mercies of God in Chriſt, promiſed to David; 5—13. the almighty power of Jehovah, manifeſted in his works and

and dispensations; 14. his justice, mercy, and truth; 15—18. the happiness and security of his people; 19—37. his covenant made with David, as the representative of Messiah, who should come of his Seed; 38—45. the church lamenteth her distressful state, at the time when this Psalm was penned;* 46—51. she prayeth for the accomplishment of the promise; and, in the mean time, 52. blesseth Jehovah.

1. *I will sing of the mercies of the* LORD *for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*

The "mercies of Jehovah" have ever employed the voices of believers to celebrate them. These mercies were promises to the human race, in their great representative and surety, before the world began; 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. they were prefigured by ancient dispensations; and, in part, fulfilled, at the incarnation of Christ. The "faithfulness" of God, in so fulfilling them, is now "made known," by the holy services of the Christian church, "to all "generations."

2. *For I have said mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.*

* Sedeciâ capto, domo David e solio deturbatâ, promissiones Dei irritas videri Propheta queritur, necdum adesse Christum. BOSSUET. Dr. Kennicott imagines it to have been composed by Isaiah, as a solemn and public address to God, at the time when Rezin and Pekah were advancing against Jerusalem.

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Whatever be at any time the ſtate of the church on earth, ſhe knoweth that the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure; that the ſacred edifice, raiſed thereon, will be incorruptible and eternal as "heaven" itſelf, where only mercy and truth are to have their perfect work, in the everlaſting felicity of the redeemed. Of this felicity, which is to be the conſummation of God's promiſes, and our hopes, we behold ſome faint reſemblance, as often as we view the ſtability, the beauty, and the glory of the viſible material "heavens."

3. *I have made a covenant with my choſen, I have ſworn unto David my ſervant:* 4. *Thy ſeed will I eſtabliſh for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.*

The two former verſes ſet forth a profeſſion of faith in God's mercy: theſe two aſſign the ground of ſuch faith; namely, the covenant which God is here introduced as declaring that he had made with David, and which he did make with him by the prophet Nathan. 2 Sam. vii. 12, &c. The covenant relates to David's "ſeed," and to the "eſtabliſhment "of his throne" in that ſeed; literally, in Solomon, for a time; ſpiritually, in Chriſt, for ever. "When "thy days ſhall be fulfilled, and thou ſhalt ſleep "with thy fathers, I will ſet up thy ſeed after thee, "which ſhall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will "eſtabliſh his kingdom. He ſhall build an houſe "for my name, and I will eſtabliſh the throne of his "kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he "ſhall be my ſon." Theſe laſt words are cited by the Apoſtle, Heb. i. 5. as ſpoken of Chriſt, to evince

evince his superiority over the angels. Yet, that the whole passage does, in the letter, relate to Solomon, can admit of no doubt, he being the "seed" and immediate "successor" of David, and the person appointed to "build an house for God's name." Here then we have an incontestable proof, that the covenant with David had Messiah for it's object; that Solomon was a figure of him; and that the Scripture hath sometimes a double sense.* It is moreover to be observed, that the covenants made with Abraham, David, &c. all had their original and foundation in the covenant made with MESSIAH, who was the true Father of the faithful, the Beloved and Chosen of God; the great Prophet, Priest, and King; the only person qualified to be a Sponsor, and to engage in a covenant with the Father, for mankind. His sufferings were the price of our redemption: and because he suffered in the flesh, as "the "son of David," therefore is he "established for "ever, and his throne built up to all generations." Remarkable are the words of the angel to Mary; "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of "his father David; and he shall reign over the house "of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall "be no end." Luke i. 32.

5. *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O* LORD; *thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints:* Or, *The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O* LORD; *and the saints thy faithfulness in the congregation.*

* "Disposui testamentum:" percussi fœdus cum electo meo: id est, Davide et Christo. BOSSUET.

Did not "the heavens praiſe the wonders of Je-"hovah," when a choir of angels deſcended from above, to ſing an anthem, at the birth of Chriſt? And how muſt the celeſtial courts have reſounded with the hallelujahs of thoſe bleſſed ſpirits, when they again received their King, returning in triumph from the conqueſt of his enemies? Nor do "the "ſaints" omit to celebrate God's "faithfulneſs in "the congregation" upon earth, while "with angels "and archangels, and all the company of hea-"ven, they laud and magnify his glorious name, "evermore praiſing him, and ſaying, Holy, holy, "holy, Lord God of hoſts, Heaven and earth are "full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord moſt "high."

6. *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the* LORD? *Who among the ſons of the mighty can be likened unto the* LORD? 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of the ſaints; and to be had in reverence of all* them that are *about him.* 8. *O* LORD *God of hoſts, who is a ſtrong* LORD *like unto thee? Or to thy faithfulneſs round about thee?* Or, *and thy faithfulneſs is round about thee.*

Theſe verſes proclaim that right and title which Jehovah hath to the praiſes of all his creatures in "heaven and earth." No one of them, however excellent and glorious, however deified and adored by fond and fooliſh man, can enter the liſts, and conteſt the ſuperiority with it's Maker. High over all is the throne of God: before him "angels" veil their faces, "ſaints" proſtrate themſelves with loweſt reverence, and created nature trembles at his word: his "power"

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is almighty, and derived from none; and with "truth" he is on all ſides inveſted as with a garment: the former enables him, the latter (if we may ſo expreſs it) binds him to perform thoſe gracious promiſes, which mercy prompted him to make, concerning our eternal redemption.

9. *Thou ruleſt the raging of the ſea: when the waves thereof ariſe, thou ſtilleſt them.*

The extent of the ocean, the multitude of it's waves, and their fury, when excited by a ſtorm, render it, in that ſtate, the moſt tremendous object in nature; nor doth any thing, which man beholds, give him ſo juſt an idea of human impotence, and of that divine power, which can excite and calm ſo boiſterous an element, at pleaſure. God himſelf therefore frequently appeals to this inſtance of his omnipotence; See Job xxxviii. 11. Jer. v. 22. an attribute, of which our Lord ſhewed himſelf to have been poſſeſſed, when, being with his diſciples in the ſhip, he aroſe and rebuked a tempeſtuous wind and a raging ſea, and there was inſtantly a calm. In all our troubles and temptations, be thou, bleſſed Jeſu, with us, and then they ſhall never finally overwhelm us.

10. *Thou haſt broken Rahab*, i. e. Egypt, *in pieces, as one that is ſlain: thou haſt ſcattered thine enemies with thy ſtrong arm.*

The deſtruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians is here mentioned, as another inſtance of God's mighty power. And it is probable, that the foregoing verſe was intended to allude more particularly to that miraculous exertion of God's ſovereignty over the wa-

ters, the diviſion of the Red Sea, which happened at the ſame time; as theſe two events are generally ſpoken of together. Thus Iſaiah; "Art thou not it "that hath cut Rahab, i. e. Egypt, and wounded "the dragon, i. e. Pharaoh? Art thou not it which "hath dried the ſea, the waters of the great deep, "that hath made the depths of the ſea a way for the "ranſomed to paſs over?" li. 9. The ſame power, which effected all this, hath ſince, in Chriſt Jeſus, overcome the world, deſtroyed the works of the devil, and ranſomed mankind from the depths of the grave.

11. *The heavens* are *thine, the earth alſo* is *thine*: as for *the world, and the fulneſs thereof, thou haſt founded them.* 12. *The north and the ſouth, thou haſt created them*; *Tabor and Hermon ſhall rejoice in thy name.*

The "heavens," and all the glorious bodies there ranged in beautiful order; the "earth," with it's rich furniture, and the unnumbered tribes of it's inhabitants, through it's whole extent, from "north to "ſouth," and from eaſt to weſt; all theſe are ſo many evidences of that wiſdom and power, which at the beginning contrived and formed them; all, in their reſpective ways, declare the glory, and ſpeak the praiſes of their great Creator; but chiefly the holy land, and the fruitful hills which adorned it, "Tabor" in one part, and "Hermon" in another, formerly ſeemed, as it were, to "rejoice" and ſing, for the abundant favours ſhowered down upon them by the God of Iſrael, who hath ſince cauſed all nations no leſs to exult and triumph in his ſaving NAME.

13. *Thou*

13. *Thou haſt a mighty arm: ſtrong is thy hand, and high* is *thy right hand.*

The Pſalmiſt, having produced and meditated on ſome eminent inſtances of divine power, draws this general concluſion from the premiſſes. Towards the Chriſtian church "the arm of Jehovah" hath been revealed in a ſtill more extraordinary manner. She reflecteth on the wonders wrought by Jeſus; a conqueſt over more formidable enemies than Pharaoh and his Egyptians; a redemption from more cruel bondage; ſalvation from ſin and death; a new creation, new heavens, and new earth, a new Jeruſalem, and a ſpiritual Sion. With additional conviction may ſhe therefore exclaim, "Thou haſt a mighty arm; ſtrong "is thy hand, and high is thy right hand!"

14. *Juſtice and judgment are the habitation,* Heb. *the eſtabliſhment of thy throne: mercy and truth ſhall go before thy face.*

Although the power of God be infinite, yet is it never exerted, but under the direction of his other attributes. When he goeth, as a judge, to his tribunal, "mercy and truth go before his face;" they are repreſented as preceding him, to give notice of his advent, and to prepare his way. "All the ways," or diſpenſations "of the Lord," as it is elſewhere obſerved, "are mercy and truth;" Pſ. xxv. 10. they are the ſubſtance of all his revelations, which either promiſe ſalvation, or relate the performance of ſuch promiſes. By theſe is man warned and prepared for "judgment," which is to be the laſt and finiſhing ſcene. And when the great judge of all the earth ſhall from his throne pronounce the irreverſible ſen-

tence, not a creature then preſent ſhall be able to accuſe that ſentence of injuſtice. After this model ſhould the thrones of princes, and the tribunals of earthly magiſtrates, be conſtituted in "juſtice and "judgment," adorned with "mercy and truth."

15. *Bleſſed* is *the people that know the joyful ſound: they ſhall walk*, O LORD, *in the light of thy countenance.*

Next to the praiſes of Jehovah, is declared the happineſs of thoſe who have him for their God; who "know the joyful ſound, or ſound of the trumpet," by which the feſtivals of the Jewiſh church were proclaimed, and the people were called together to the offices of devotion; who enjoy the "light" of truth, and through grace are enabled to "walk" therein. Theſe bleſſings are now become our own; the evangelical trumpet hath ſounded through the once heathen world; the ſun of righteouſneſs hath riſen upon all nations. Let us attend to the "joyful ſound;" let us "walk" in the glorious "light."

16. *In thy name ſhall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteouſneſs ſhall they be exalted.* 17. *For thou art the glory of their ſtrength: and in thy favour our horn ſhall be exalted.* 18. *For the* LORD is *our defence; and the holy One of Iſrael is our King.*

It is the duty of Chriſtians, as it was that of Iſraelites, to aſcribe all their ſtrength, their ſucceſs, and their glory, whether in matters temporal or ſpiritual, to Jehovah alone. Having heard the ſound, and experienced the illuminating and reviving influences of the Goſpel, in the name and in the ſalvation of God we rejoice all the day, and in his righteouſneſs

teouſneſs only we truſt to be exalted to heaven: to him we attribute the glory of that ſtrength, with which, in time of temptation, we may find ourſelves happily endued; and in his favour, or grace, our horn, or the efforts of our power, ſhall be exalted, and crowned with victory; our defence in all dangers is from Jehovah, who was ever the ſhield of his ancient people; and the Holy One of Iſrael is our Redeemer, and our King.

19. *Then thou ſpakeſt in viſion to thy holy one, and ſaidſt, I have laid*, or, *placed help upon*, or, *in* one that is *mighty: I have exalted* one *choſen out of the people.*

The covenant, made with David, was mentioned in general terms, above, at verſe, 4, 5. But a more particular account is now given of God's diſpenſations, relative to the ſon of Jeſſe, and his poſterity. We are preſented with the ſubſtance of the revelation made, upon this ſubject, "in viſion," to one of the prophets, perhaps Samuel, or Nathan, here ſtyled an "holy one," or religious perſon, one favoured and accepted by God, who is introduced as manifeſting to this his prophet the divine counſels concerning David. "I have placed help upon, or in "one, who ſhall become an eminent and mighty Sa-"viour of Iſrael; from among all the people I have "choſen, and determined to exalt him, for that pur-"poſe to the throne." Thus was Meſſiah foretold, in prophetical viſions and revelations, as the perſon deſigned to be the mighty Redeemer of his church; thus, in the fulneſs of time, was he choſen from among

among all the children of men, and exalted, through ſufferings, to an eternal throne.

20. *I have found David my ſervant: with my holy oil have I anointed him*; 21. *With whom my hand ſhall be eſtabliſhed; mine arm alſo ſhall ſtrengthen him.*

David was the ſervant of God; he was, by the prophet Samuel, anointed with oil; he was ſtrengthened and eſtabliſhed in his kingdom, by the hand and arm of Jehovah. But never let Chriſtians fail, in this eminently figurative character, to contemplate that true DAVID (for ſo HE is called, Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 25.) the BELOVED Son of God; "the "ſervant and elect of Jehovah, in whom his ſoul "delighted, and on whom he put his Spirit;" Iſai. xlii. 1. whom he "anointed with his holy oil, with "the oil of gladneſs, with the Holy Ghoſt and with "power;" Pſ. xlv. 7. Acts x. 38. whom he ſtrengthened, and eſtabliſhed in his ſpiritual kingdom, with his hand, and arm, and the might of his omnipotence.

22. *The enemy ſhall not exact upon*, or, *deceive him: nor the ſon of wickedneſs afflict*, or, *ſubdue him.* 23. *And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.* 24. *But my faithfulneſs and my mercy* ſhall be *with him: and in my name ſhall his horn be exalted.*

Theſe promiſes were fulfilled to David, when God delivered him out of the hand of Saul, and of all his other adverſaries. See 2 Sam. xxii. 1. And in what a full, perfect, and divine ſenſe were they verified to Chriſt? That ſubtle enemy, "which deceiveth the "whole world," was not able to deceive him; neither the

the ſons nor the father of wickedneſs could overthrow and ſubdue him; all oppoſition fell before him, and they who hated him ſuffered unparalleled deſolation; the promiſed faithfulneſs and mercy of Jehovah were ever with him, and his kingdom was exalted with glory and honour.

25. *I will ſet his hand alſo in the ſea, and his right hand in the rivers.*

The dominions of David and his ſon Solomon extended from the Mediterranean "ſea" to the "rivers" Euphrates, &c. the empire of Chriſt is univerſal, over Jews and Gentiles, throughout all the earth. See Pſ. lxxii. 8. &c.

26. *He ſhall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my ſalvation.* 27. *Alſo I will make him my firſt born, higher than the kings of the earth.*

All this, if in ſome reſpects true of David, is much more emphatically ſo of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. "Son of God" is one of his diſtinguiſhed titles; of "the Father" he continually ſpoke, and to the Father he addreſſed his prayers and cries, in the days of his fleſh; as man, he was raiſed and exalted by the power and glory of the Divinity; he was "the "firſt born of every creature, the firſt begotten from "the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth." Col. i. 15. Rev. i. 5. Make us, bleſſed Lord, the ſons of God, and teach us to cry, Abba, Father; give us victory and dominion over ſin and death, that we may live and reign with thee for ever.

28. *My mercy will I keep for*, or, *to him for evermore, and my covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him.* 29. *His*

ſeed

ſeed alſo will I make to endure *for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.*

God kept his mercy and covenant with David, by preſerving the line of his poſterity, until his great antitype, Meſſiah, the ſubject of all the promiſes, came, by whom the kingdom was eſtabliſhed for ever, being changed into a ſpiritual one, which is to be transferred from earth to heaven, and rendered coeval with thoſe eternal manſions of the bleſſed.

30. *If his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judgments*; 31. *If they break*, or, *profane my ſtatutes, and keep not my commandments*; 32. *Then will I viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes.* 33. *Nevertheleſs, my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail.* 34. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*

The poſterity of David were to enjoy God's favour, or be deprived of it, as they proved obedient, or diſobedient to his "law;" as they executed or perverted it's civil "judgments;" as they obſerved or neglected it's ceremonial "ſtatutes," or religious inſtitutions; as they kept or broke it's "command-"ments," or moral precepts. When they became rebellious, idolatrous, and profligate, the rod was lifted up, and due chaſtiſement inflicted, ſometimes by the immediate hand of heaven, ſometimes by the inſtrumentality of their heathen adverſaries; famine and peſtilence, war and captivity, were at different times employed to reclaim backſliding Iſrael. But ſtill, the "covenant" of God in Chriſt ſtood ſure; the Jewiſh nation was preſerved, through all changes

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and revolutions, "until the Seed came to whom the "promiſe was made;" nor was Jeruſalem deſtroyed, before the new and ſpiritual kingdom of Meſſiah was ſet up in the earth. Chriſtian communities, and the individuals that compoſe them, are in like manner corrected and puniſhed for their offences. "Nevertheleſs, God's loving kindneſs will he not ut"terly take from us, nor ſuffer his faithfulneſs to "fail. His covenant will he not break, nor alter "the thing that is gone out of his lips." So—"I "am with you always," ſays the Redeemer, "even "to the end of the world; and the gates of hell ſhall "not prevail againſt my church." Matt. xxviii. 20. xvi. 18. Nor ſhall the world be deſtroyed, until Chriſt come again, and his glorious kingdom be ready to appear.

35. *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto David.* 36. *His ſeed ſhall endure for ever, and his throne as the ſun before me.* 37. *It ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever as the moon, and* as *a faithful witneſs in heaven.*

The promiſe, covenant, and oath of God, which he declareth ſhall never fail, are here repeated. They relate to Chriſt, that "Seed," or "Son of David," who "endureth for ever:" His throne is reſplendent as the "ſun," and ſhall continue, after that luminary is extinguiſhed: his church is permanent as the "moon," though, like her, ſubject to viciſſitudes, and liable, for a time, to be obſcured by eclipſes, during her preſent ſtate upon earth. And while the rainbow ſhall be ſeen in the clouds, man has "a "faithful witneſs in heaven" of the immutable truth

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of God's word, and the infallible accompliſhment of what he promiſes. "Look upon the rainbow," ſaith the wiſe ſon of Sirach, "and praiſe him who "made it: very beautiful it is in the brightneſs "thereof: it compaſſeth the heaven about with a "glorious circle, and the hands of the moſt High "have bended it." Eccluſ. xliii. 11. But let us not forget likewiſe, when we look upon the rainbow, to praiſe him who made it to be a ſign and ſacred ſymbol of mercy; in which capacity we behold it, to our great and endleſs comfort, compaſſing the throne of Chriſt with a gracious, as well as glorious circle. "There was a RAINBOW round about the "throne." Rev. iv. 3. Ezek. i. 28.

38. *But thou haſt caſt off and abhorred, thou haſt been wroth with thine anointed.* 39. *Thou haſt made void the covenant of thy ſervant; thou haſt prophaned his crown,* by caſting it *to the ground.*

In the former part of our Pſalm, we have ſeen what the divine promiſes were, which had been made to the houſe of David. By the latter part, upon which we are entering, it appears, that the Pſalm was written at a time, when the church of Iſrael was in ſuch a manner oppreſſed and reduced by her enemies that her members began almoſt to deſpair of thoſe promiſes receiving their accompliſhment. God ſeemed to have "caſt off" and "abhorred" his "anointed" and "ſervant," that is David, or rather the prince of his family, who was upon the throne, when this captivity and deſolation happened; the "covenant" ſeemed to be overturned and "made "void,"

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"void," when the "crown" of Iſrael was defiled in the duſt.

40. *Thou haſt broken down all his hedges, thou haſt brought his ſtrong holds to ruin.* 41. *All that paſs by the way ſpoil him; he is a reproach to his neighbours.* 42. *Thou haſt ſet up the right hand of his adverſaries; thou haſt made all his enemies to rejoice.* 43. *Thou haſt alſo turned the edge of his ſword, and haſt not made him to ſtand in the battle.* 44. *Thou haſt made his glory to ceaſe, and caſt his throne down to the ground.* 45. *The days of his youth haſt thou ſhortened: thou haſt covered him with ſhame.*

The manifold calamities of Sion are in theſe verſes enumerated: The demolition of fences and fortifications; the cruel ravages conſequent thereupon; the ſhame of defeats; the reproaches and inſults of victorious adverſaries; the diſhonours of violent and untimely death. In days like theſe here deſcribed, when the church and the king are permitted to fall into the hands of thoſe who hate them, and to drink thus deeply of the cup of affliction, diſtruſt and deſpondency are apt to ſeize upon the minds of men. Nay, when the faithful few beheld the true "Son of David," and "Anointed" of Jehovah, in the day of his ſufferings; when they ſaw him, without help or defence, ſpoiled and re-"proached by his neighbours;" when they viewed "the right hand of his adverſaries ſet up," and all his "enemies rejoicing" over him; his "glory "made to ceaſe," and his "crown profaned in the "duſt; the days of his youth ſhortened," and himſelf delivered over to a "ſhameful" as well as painful

ful death; they then began to think "the covenant "made void," and the promiſes at an end. "We "truſted," ſaid they, "that it had been he who "ſhould have redeemed Iſrael!" Luke xxiv. 21. And although Chriſt be long ſince riſen from the dead, and aſcended into heaven, yet the prevalence of iniquity, and the oppreſſions of the church, have been, and, in the laſt days, will be ſuch, as to put the faith and hope of his ſervants to a ſore trial, while they wait for his ſecond, as the ancient Jews did for his firſt advent.

46. *How long*, LORD? *Wilt thou hide thyſelf for ever? Shall thy wrath burn like fire?* 47. *Remember how ſhort my time is: wherefore haſt thou made all men in vain?* Or, as Ainſworth tranſlates the verſe, *Remember how tranſitory I am, unto what vanity thou haſt created all the ſons of Adam.* 48. *What man* is he that *liveth, and ſhall not ſee death? Shall be deliver his ſoul*, or, *animal frame, from the hand of the grave?* 49. LORD, *where* are *thy former loving kindneſſes*, which *thou ſwareſt unto David in thy truth?*

This is the humble and dutiful expoſtulation of the church with God, in all her diſtreſſes upon the earth. By aſking, "How long, LORD? Wilt thou "be angry, for ever?" She tacitly pleadeth his promiſe not to be ſo: ſhe urgeth the ſhortneſs of man's life here below, the univerſality of the fatal ſentence, the impoſſibility of avoiding death, and, if nothing farther was to happen, the fruſtration of the divine counſels concerning man. From thence ſhe intreateth God to remember the "loving kindneſſes" once promiſed by him with an oath to David, as related

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in the former part of the Pſalm. Theſe "loving "kindneſſes" are called, in Iſaiah lv. 3. "the ſure "mercies of David;" which "ſure mercies of Da-"vid" are affirmed by St. Paul, Acts xiii. 34. to have been then conferred on Iſrael, when, in the perſon of Jeſus, God raiſed our nature from the grave. To a reſurrection, therefore, believers have ever aſpired; thither have they directed their wiſhes, and on that event have they fixed their hopes, as the end of temporal ſorrows, and the beginning of eternal joys.

50. *Remember*, LORD, *the reproach of thy ſervants*; how *I do bear in my boſom* the reproach of *all the mighty people*; 51. *Wherewith thine enemies have reproached*, O LORD; *wherewith they have reproached the footſteps of thine anointed.*

The laſt argument urged by the church, in her expoſtulation with God for a ſpeedy redemption, is, the continual reproach to which ſhe was ſubject, on account of the promiſe being delayed. The "mighty people," or heathen nations, who held her in captivity, and were witneſſes of her wretched and forlorn eſtate, ridiculed her pretenſions to perpetuity of empire in the houſe of David; they blaſphemed the God, who was ſaid to have made ſuch promiſes; and "reproached the footſteps," or mocked at the tardy advent of his Meſſiah*, who was to eſtabliſh

* "Exprobraverunt veſtigia Chriſti tui:" tarditatem veſtigiorum Chriſti tui. Chald. Irridebant nos quòd non adveniret expectatus ille Liberator, ſive Cyrus, ſive potius Chriſtus de ſemine Davidis, regno ejus inſtaurando, et in æternum firmando. BOSSUET.

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in Iſrael his everlaſting throne. All theſe cruel taunts and inſults ſhe was obliged to "bear in her boſom," and there to ſuppreſs them in ſilence, having nothing to anſwer, in the day of her calamity, and ſeeming deſtitution. St. Peter gives us a like account of the ſtate of the Chriſtian church, in the latter days: he exhorts us to be "mindful of the words which were "ſpoken before by the holy prophets, and of the "commandments of the Apoſtles of the Lord and "Saviour, becauſe there ſhall come in the laſt days "ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſay-"ing, Where is the promiſe of his coming!" 2 Pet. iii. 4.

52. *Bleſſed be the* LORD *for evermore. Amen, and Amen.*

But whatever be at any time our diſtreſs, either as a community, or as individuals, ſtill are we to believe, ſtill to hope, ſtill to bleſs and praiſe Jehovah, whoſe word is true, whoſe works are faithful, whoſe chaſtiſements are mercies, and all whoſe promiſes are, in Chriſt Jeſus, yea and amen, for evermore.

XVIII DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XC.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm is called, in it's title, "A prayer "of Moſes, the man of God." By him it is imagined to have been compoſed, when God

God ſhortened the days of the murmuring Iſraelites in the wilderneſs. See Numb. xiv. It is, however, a Pſalm of general uſe, and is made, by the church, a part of her funeral ſervice. It containeth, 1, 2. an addreſs to the eternal and unchangeable God, the ſaviour and preſerver of his people; 3—10. a moſt affecting deſcription of man's mortal and tranſitory ſtate on earth, ſince the fall; 11. a complaint, that few meditate in ſuch a manner upon death, as to prepare themſelves for it; 12. a prayer for grace ſo to do; 13—17. and for the mercies of Redemption.

1. LORD, *thou haſt been our dwelling place in all generations.* 2. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the earth and the world: even from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.*

The Pſalmiſt, about to deſcribe man's fleeting and tranſitory ſtate, firſt directeth us to contemplate the unchangeable nature and attributes of God, who hath always been a "dwelling-place," or place of defence, and refuge, affording protection and comfort to his people in the world, as he promiſed to be before the world began, and will, in a more glorious manner, continue to be, after it's diſſolution. See, for a parallel, Pſ. cii. 25, &c. with St. Paul's application, Heb. i. 10.

3. *Thou turneſt man to deſtruction; and ſayeſt, Return, ye children of men.*

Death was the penalty inflicted on man for ſin. The latter part of the verſe alludes to the fatal ſen-

tence, Gen. iii. 19. "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt "ſhalt thou return." How apt are we to forget both our original and our end!

4. *For a thouſand years in thy ſight* are but *as yeſterday when it is paſt, and as a watch in the night.*

The connection between the verſe preceding and the verſe now before us, ſeems to be this. God ſentenced man to death. It is true, the execution of the ſentence was at firſt deferred, and the term of human life ſuffered to extend to near a thouſand years. But what was even that, what is any period of time, or time itſelf, if compared with the duration of the Eternal? All time is equal, when it is paſt; a thouſand years, when gone, are forgotten as yeſterday; and the longeſt life of man, to a perſon who looks back upon it, may appear only as three hours, or one quarter of the night.

5. *Thou carrieſt them away as with a flood, they are* as *a ſleep in the morning*; they are *like graſs* which *groweth up*; or, *as graſs* that *changeth.* 6. *In the morning it flouriſheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*

The ſhortneſs of life, and the ſuddenneſs of our departure hence, are illuſtrated by three ſimilitudes. The firſt is that of a "flood," or torrent pouring unexpectedly and impetuouſly from the mountains, and ſweeping all before it in an inſtant. The ſecond is that of "ſleep," from which when a man awaketh, he thinketh the time paſſed in it to have been nothing. In the third ſimilitude, man is compared to the "graſs" of the field. In the morning of youth, fair and beautiful, he groweth up and flouriſheth; in

in the evening of old age, (and how often before that evening) he is cut down by the ſtroke of death; all his juices, to the circulation of which he ſtood indebted for life, health, and ſtrength, are dried up; he withereth, and turneth again to his earth. "Surely all fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof "is as the flower of the field!" Iſai. xl. 6. Of this truth, the word of God, the voice of nature, and daily experience join to aſſure us: yet who ordereth his life and converſation, as if he believed it?

7. *For we are conſumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.* 8. *Thou haſt ſet our iniquities before thee; our ſecret* ſins *in the light of thy countenance.*

The generations of men are troubled and conſumed by divers diſeaſes, and ſundry kinds of death, through the diſpleaſure of God; his diſpleaſure is occaſioned by their ſins, all of which he ſeeth and puniſheth. If Moſes wrote this Pſalm, the provocations and chaſtiſements of Iſrael are here alluded to. But the caſe of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs is the caſe of Chriſtians in the world, and the ſame thing is true both in them and in us.

9. *For all our days are paſſed away in thy wrath, we ſpend our years as a tale* that is told.

Life is compared to a "tale" that is told and forgotten; to a "word," which is but air, or breath, and vaniſheth into nothing, as ſoon as ſpoken; or perhaps, as the original generally ſignifies, to a "meditation, a thought," which is of a nature ſtill more fleeting and tranſient.

10. *The days of our years* are *threeſcore years and*

ten, and if by reaſon of ſtrength they be *fourſcore years, yet* is *their ſtrength labour and ſorrow: for it is ſoon cut off, and we fly away.*

This again might be primarily ſpoken by Moſes, concerning Iſrael. The generation of thoſe who came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards, fell within the ſpace of forty years, in the wilderneſs; Numb. xxiv. 29. and they, who lived longeſt, experienced only labour and ſorrow, until they were cut off, like graſs, and, by the breath of God's diſpleaſure, blown away from the face of the earth. Like the Iſraelites, we have been brought out of Egypt, and ſojourn in the wilderneſs; like them we murmur, and offend God our Saviour; like them we fall and periſh. To the age of ſeventy years few of us can hope to attain; labour and ſorrow are our portion in the world; we are mowed down, as this year's graſs of the field; we fly away, and are no more ſeen in the land of the living.

11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath.*

Houbigant renders the verſe thus; "Quis novit "vim iræ tuæ; et, prout terribilis es, furorem "tuum?—Who knoweth," or conſidereth, "the "power of thine anger; and thy wrath, in propor-"tion as thou art terrible?" That is, in other words, Notwithſtanding all the manifeſtations of God's indignation againſt ſin, which introduced death and every other calamity among men, who is there that knoweth, who that duly conſidereth and layeth to heart the almighty power of that indignation; who that is induced, by beholding the mortality

tality of his neighbours, to prepare himſelf for his own departure hence? Such holy conſideration is the gift of God, from whom the Pſalmiſt, in the next verſe, directeth us to requeſt it.

12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply* our *hearts unto wiſdom.*

He who "numbereth his days," or taketh a right account of the ſhortneſs of this preſent life, compared with the unnumbered ages of that eternity which is future, will ſoon become a proficient in the ſchool of true wiſdom. He will learn to give the preference where it is due; to do good, and ſuffer evil, upon earth, expecting the reward of both in heaven. Make us wiſe, bleſſed Lord, but wiſe unto ſalvation.

13. *Return,* O LORD, *how long? And let it repent thee concerning,* or, *be propitiated towards thy ſervants.*

During the reign of death over poor mankind, God is repreſented as abſent; he is therefore by the faithful intreated to "return," and to ſatisfy their longing deſires after ſalvation; to haſten the day when Meſſiah ſhould make a "propitiation" for ſin, when he ſhould redeem his ſervants from death, and ranſom them from the power of the grave. The Chriſtian, who knoweth that his Lord is riſen indeed, looks forward to the reſurrection of the juſt, when death ſhall be finally ſwallowed up in victory.

14. *O ſatisfy us early,* or, *in the morning, with thy mercy: that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*

15. *Make us glad according to the days* wherein *thou haſt afflicted us,* and *the years* wherein *we have ſeen evil.*

The church prayeth for the dawning of that glorious morning, when every cloud ſhall vaniſh at the riſing of the ſun of righteouſneſs, and night and darkneſs ſhall be no more. Then only ſhall we be "ſatisfied, or ſaturated with the mercy" of Jehovah; then only ſhall we "rejoice and be glad all our "days." The time of our pilgrimage upon earth is a time of ſorrow; we grieve for our departed friends; and our ſurviving friends muſt ſoon grieve for us; theſe are "the days wherein God afflicteth "us, theſe the years wherein we ſee evil;" but he will hereafter "make us glad according to them;" in proportion to our ſufferings, if rightly we bear thoſe ſufferings, will be our reward; nay, "theſe "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Then ſhall our joy be increaſed, and receive an additional reliſh, from the remembrance of our former ſorrow; then ſhall we bleſs the days and the years which exerciſed our faith, and perfected our patience; and then ſhall we bleſs God, who chaſtiſed us for a ſeaſon, that he might ſave us for ever.

16. *Let thy work appear unto thy ſervants, and thy glory unto their children.* 17. *And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and eſtabliſh thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands eſtabliſh thou it.*

The Redemption of man is that "work" of God, whereby his "glory" is manifeſted to all generations, and which all generations do therefore long to behold accompliſhed. For this purpoſe, the faithful

ful beſeech God to let his "beauty," his ſplendor, the light of his countenance, his grace and favour, be upon them: to "eſtabliſh the work of their "hands," to bleſs, proſper, and perfect them in their Chriſtian courſe and warfare; until, through him, they ſhall be enabled to ſubdue ſin, and triumph over death.

PSALM XCI.

ARGUMENT.

The prophet 1—10. declareth the ſecurity of the Righteous Man under the care and protection of heaven, in times of danger, when 11, 12. a guard of angels is ſet about him. 13. His final victory over the enemies of his ſalvation is foretold; and 14—16. God himſelf is introduced, promiſing him deliverance, exaltation, glory, and immortality. The Pſalm is addreſſed, primarily, to Meſſiah. That it relateth to him, Jews and Chriſtians are agreed; and the devil, Matt. iv. 6. cited two verſes from it, as univerſally known and allowed to have been ſpoken of him.

1. *He that dwelleth in the ſecret place of the moſt High, ſhall abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty.* 2. *I will ſay of the Lord,* He is *my refuge and my fortreſs: my God, in him will I truſt.* 3. *Surely he ſhall*

deliver thee from the ſnare of the fowler, and from the noiſome peſtilence.

In theſe verſes, as they now ſtand, there is much obſcurity and confuſion. Biſhop Lowth, in his xxvith Lecture, ſeemeth to have given their true conſtruction "He who dwelleth in the ſecret "place of the moſt High; who abideth under the "ſhadow of the Almighty; who ſaith of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortreſs, my God, in "whom I will truſt;"—leaving the ſentence thus imperfect, the Pſalmiſt maketh a beautiful apoſtrophe to that perſon whom he has been deſcribing—"Surely he ſhall deliver thee from the ſnare of the "fowler and from the noiſome peſtilence." The deſcription is eminently applicable to the man Chriſt Jeſus*. He is repreſented as dwelling, like the ark in the Holy of holies, under the immediate "ſha-"dow" and protection of the Almighty, who was his "refuge and fortreſs" againſt the open attacks of his enemies; his preſerver from the "ſnares" of the devil, and from the univerſal contagion of ſin, that ſpiritual "peſtilence." In all dangers, whether ſpiritual or corporeal, the members of Chriſt's myſtical body may reflect with comfort, that they are under the ſame almighty protector.

4. *He ſhall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings ſhalt thou truſt: his truth* ſhall be thy *ſhield and buckler.*

* Ode Davidica inſignis xci agit directe et primo loco de tegmine et defenſione quam Deus Chriſto Jeſu Doctori et apoſtolis ipſius præſtaret. VITRINGA, Comment. in Jeſai. ii. 565.

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The ſecurity afforded, by a ſuperintending Providence, to thoſe who truſt therein, is here, with the utmoſt beauty and elegance, compared to that ſhelter, which the young of birds are always ſure to find under the "wings" of their dam, when fear cauſeth them to fly thither for refuge. See Deut. xxxii. 11. Matt. xxiii. 37. The "truth" of God's word, wherein he promiſeth to be our defence, is, to a believer, his "ſhield and buckler," in the day of battle and war.

5. *Thou ſhalt not be afraid for the terror by night*; *nor for the arrow* that *flieth by day*: 6. Nor *for the peſtilence* that *walketh in darkneſs*: nor *for the deſtruction* that *waſteth at noon day*.

How much man ſtandeth in need of the above-mentioned protection of heaven, appeareth from a ſurvey of the dangers, to which he is continually expoſed. Various are the terrors of the night; manifold the perils of the day; from diſeaſes, whoſe infection maketh it's progreſs unobſerved; from aſſaults, caſualties, and accidents, which can neither be foreſeen, nor guarded againſt. The ſoul hath likewiſe her enemies, ready to attack and ſurprize her at all hours. Avarice and ambition are abroad watching for her in the day; while concupiſcence, like a peſtilence, "walketh in darkneſs." In adverſity ſhe is diſturbed by terrors; in proſperity, ſtill more endangered by pleaſures. But Jeſus Chriſt has overcome the world, to prevent us from being overcome by it.

7. *A thouſand ſhall fall at thy ſide, and ten thouſand at thy right hand*: but it *ſhall not come nigh thee*.

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This promiſe has oftentimes, in a wonderful manner, been verified to thoſe faithful ſervants of God, whom the peſtilence itſelf hath not deterred from doing the duties of their ſtation. The biſhop, and ſome of the intendants of Marſeilles, who continued to perform their reſpective offices, during the whole time of the plague there, in 1720, are ſignal and well known inſtances. Sin is a peſtilence, the contagion of which no ſon of Adam ever eſcaped, but the bleſſed Jeſus. He ſtood alone untouched by it's venom; thouſands and ten thonſands, all the myriads of mankind, fell around him; "but it did not "come nigh Him." Heal us of this our diſtemper, O thou phyſician of ſouls, and let us not prove our everlaſting deſtruction; "ſtand," like thy repreſentative of old, "between the dead and the "living, and let the plague be ſtayed." Numb. xvi. 47, 48.

8. *Only with thine eyes ſhalt thou behold and ſee the reward of the wicked.*

The meaning is, that the righteous perſon, all along ſpoken of, himſelf ſecure from the judgments of God, ſhould in ſafety behold the deſtruction wrought by them upon impenitent and incorrigible ſinners. This will be the caſe with the church, as well as her glorious Head, at the laſt day.

9. *Becauſe thou haſt made the* LORD, which is *my refuge*, even *the moſt High thy habitation:* 10. *There ſhall no evil befal thee, neither ſhall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*

The ſentiment in theſe verſes is evidently the ſame with that in verſes 5, 6. namely, that God preſerveth

ſuch

ſuch as truſt in him, after the pattern of the holy Jeſus, from thoſe evils, and from that perdition, which are reſerved for the ungodly. Dr. Durell tranſlates the 9th verſe, in the way of apoſtrophe, literally thus—"Surely, thou, O Lord, art my re-"fuge; O moſt High, thou haſt fixed thine habita-"tion;" i. e. in Sion, to be the protector of his ſervant.

11. *For he ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* 12. *They ſhall bear thee up in their hands, leſt thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.*

This paſſage was cited by the devil, who tempted our Lord to caſt himſelf from a pinnacle of the temple, upon preſumption of the promiſe here made, that angels ſhould guard and ſupport him in all dangers. But Chriſt, in his anſwer, at once detecteth and expoſeth the ſophiſtry of the grand Deceiver, by ſhewing, that the promiſe belonged only to thoſe who fell unavoidably into danger, in the courſe of duty; ſuch might hope for the help and protection of heaven; but that he who ſhould wantonly and abſurdly throw himſelf into peril, merely to try whether Providence would bring him out of it, muſt expect to periſh for his pains. "Jeſus ſaith unto him, it is "written again, thou ſhalt not TEMPT the Lord thy "God." Matt. iv. 7.

13. *Thou ſhalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon ſhalt thou trample under thy feet.*

The fury and the venom of our ſpiritual enemies are often in Scripture portrayed by the natural qualities of "lions and ſerpents." Meſſiah's compleat

victory

victory over thoſe enemies ſeemeth here to be predicted. Through grace he maketh us more than conquerors in our conflicts with the ſame adverſaries. "The God of peace," ſaith St. Paul, "ſhall bruiſe "Satan under your feet ſhortly." Rom. xvi. 20. And it is obſervable, that when the ſeventy diſciples return to Chriſt with joy, ſaying, "Lord, even the "devils are ſubject unto us through thy name;" he anſwers, in the metaphorical language of our Pſalm; "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on ſcor-"pions and ſerpents, and over all the power of the "enemy, and nothing ſhall by any means hurt you. "Notwithſtanding, in this rejoice not, that the SPI-"RITS are ſubject unto you, &c." Luke x. 17. Give us, O Lord, courage to reſiſt the "lion's" rage, and wiſdom to elude the wiles of the "ſerpent."

14. *Becauſe he hath ſet his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will ſet him on high, becauſe he hath known my name.* 15. *He ſhall call upon me, and I will anſwer him;* I will be *with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour*, or, *glorify him.* 16. *With long life will I ſatisfy him, and ſhew him my ſalvation.*

In the former part of our Pſalm, the prophet had ſpoken in his own perſon; here God himſelf is plainly introduced, as the ſpeaker. And O how ſweet, how delightful and comfortable are his words, addreſſed eminently to his beloved Son Meſſiah; and in him to all of us, his adopted children, and the heirs of eternal life; to all who love God, and have "known his name." To ſuch are promiſed, an anſwer to their prayers; the preſence of their heavenly Father

Father with them, in the day of trouble, protection and deliverance; ſalvation, and honour, and glory, and immortality. All theſe promiſes have already been made good to our gracious Head and Repreſentative. His prayers have been heard; his ſufferings are over; he is riſen and aſcended; and behold, he liveth and reigneth for evermore. Swift fly the intermediate years, and riſe that long expected morning, when He who is gone "to prepare a place for "us, ſhall come again, and take us to himſelf, that "where he is, we may be alſo!"

PSALM XCII.

ARGUMENT.

The title of this Pſalm is, "A Pſalm, or Song, "for the Sabbath day." It teacheth 1—5. the duty, time, and manner of giving thanks for the works and diſpenſations of God. Thoughtleſs men are admoniſhed 6. to reflect upon the final iſſue of all theſe works and diſpenſations; namely, 7—9. the utter perdition of the ungodly, and 10—14. the exaltation of the church in Chriſt Jeſus, 15. to the praiſe and glory of God moſt high.

1. It is *a good* thing *to give thanks unto the* LORD, *and to ſing praiſes unto thy name, O moſt High:* 2. *To ſhew forth thy loving kindneſs in the morning, and thy faith-*

faithfulneſs every night: 3. Upon an inſtrument of ten ſtrings, and upon the pſaltery; upon the harp with a ſolemn ſound.

"Thankſgiving" is the duty, and ought to be the delight of a Chriſtian. It is his duty, as being the leaſt return he can make to his great benefactor: it ought to be his delight, for it is that of angels, and will be that of every grateful heart, whether in heaven, or on earth. The "mercy" of God in promiſing ſalvation, and his "faithfulneſs" in accompliſhing it, are inexhauſtible ſubjects for morning and "evening" praiſes; every inſtrument ſhould be ſtrung, and every voice tuned to celebrate them, until day and night come to an end. But more eſpecially ſhould this be done on the "ſabbath" day; which, when ſo employed, affords a lively reſemblance of that eternal ſabbath, to be hereafter kept by the redeemed, in the kingdom of God.

4. *For thou,* LORD, *haſt made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

A proſpect of creation, in the vernal ſeaſon, fallen as it is, inſpires the mind with a joy, which no words can expreſs. But how doth the regenerate ſoul exult and triumph at beholding that "work" of God's "hand," whereby he hath created all things anew in Chriſt Jeſus! If we can be pleaſed with ſuch a world as this, where ſin and death have fixed their habitation; ſhall we not much rather admire thoſe other heavens, and that other earth, wherein dwell righteouſneſs and life? What are we to think of the palace, ſince even the priſon is not without it's charms!

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5. O LORD, *how great are thy works!* and *thy thoughts are very deep.* 6. *A brutiſh man knoweth not; neither doth a fool underſtand this.*

Glorious are the works, profound the counſels, marvellous the diſpenſations of God, in nature, in providence, in grace. But all are loſt to the man void of ſpiritual diſcernment; who, like his fellow "brutes," is bowed down to earth, and knoweth no pleaſures but thoſe of ſenſe. Here he hath choſen his paradiſe, and ſet up his tabernacle: not conſidering, that his tabernacle muſt ſhortly be taken down, and he muſt remove hence for ever.

7. *When the wicked ſpring as the graſs, and when all the workers of iniquity do flouriſh; it is that they ſhall be deſtroyed for ever.* 8. *But thou,* LORD, art moſt *high for evermore.*

It is not improbable, that theſe verſes ſhould be connected with that preceding, thus—"A brutiſh "man knoweth not; neither doth a fool underſtand "this;" namely, that "When the wicked ſpring as "the graſs, and when all the workers of iniquity do "flouriſh; it is that they ſhall be deſtroyed for ever;" they are only nouriſhing themſelves like ſenſeleſs cattle in plentiful paſtures, for the approaching day of ſlaughter. He who is ignorant of the final iſſue of things, who attendeth not to his eternal intereſt, he is, in Scripture language, "the brutiſh man," and the "fool," who knoweth not the works, neither underſtandeth the deſigns of heaven. When the "graſs" hath attained to it's moſt flouriſhing eſtate, and all the flowers of the field are in perfect beauty, then the mower entereth with his ſcythe. What a beautiful

beautiful and inſtructive emblem is here held forth to us; what a forcible admonition to truſt only in him, who, without "variableneſs or ſhadow of turn-"ing," is "moſt high for evermore!"

9. *For lo, thine enemies,* O LORD, *lo, thine enemies ſhall periſh: all the workers of iniquity ſhall be ſcattered.* 10. *But my horn ſhalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I ſhall be,* or, *I am anointed with freſh oil.*

The "workers of iniquity" are the "enemies of "Jehovah," and will be "ſcattered" by the breath of his diſpleaſure, as graſs, after it is cut down, dried up, and withered, is driven away by the whirlwinds of heaven. "But my horn," ſaith the Pſalmiſt, (it is likely, in the perſon of Meſſiah,) "my "horn," that is, the ſtrength and power of my kingdom, "ſhalt thou exalt like the horn of the "unicorn*," like the power of the ſtrongeſt creatures, to which that of ſtates and empires is often compared; "I ſhall be," or, "I am anointed with "freſh oil;" I am appointed and conſecrated king by the holy unction. Chriſtians have "an unction "from the Holy One," by which they are enabled to ſubdue their ſpiritual enemies; they reign over their paſſions and affections; they are exalted in the Redeemer; they are "made unto their God kings "and prieſts." 1 John ii. 20. Rev. v. 10.

11. *Mine eye alſo ſhall ſee* my deſire *on mine enemies: and mine ears ſhall hear* my deſire *of the wicked that riſe up againſt me.*

* Heb. רְאֵם An eaſtern animal of the "ſtag" or "deer" kind, remarkable for it's height, ſtrength, and fierceneſs.

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The words, "my deſire," are twice inſerted by our tranſlators. But would it not be better, if we were to ſupply the ellipſis in this manner. "Mine "eye ſhall behold the fall of mine enemies; and "mine ear ſhall hear the deſtruction of the wicked, "that riſe up againſt me." The ſenſe of the verſe is plain. It is intended to expreſs an aſſurance of faith, an humble confidence in the promiſes of God, that our efforts ſhall at length be crowned with victory over every thing which reſiſteth, and oppoſeth itſelf; and that the day is coming, when we ſhall view all the enemies of our ſalvation dead at our feet.

12. *The righteous ſhall flouriſh like the palm tree: he ſhall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*

The momentary proſperity of the wicked was compared above to the tranſient verdure of "graſs." The durable felicity of the righteous is here likened to the laſting ſtrength and beauty of "palms" and "cedars." But chiefly is the compariſon applicable to that Juſt One, the King of Righteouſneſs, and Tree of life; eminent and upright; ever verdant and fragrant; under the greateſt preſſure and weight of ſufferings, ſtill aſcending toward heaven; affording both fruit and protection; incorruptible and immortal. "I ſate down," ſaith the Church, "under "his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was "ſweet to my taſte." Song ii. 3.

13. *Thoſe that be planted in the houſe of the* LORD, *ſhall flouriſh in the courts of our God.*

Believers are ſtyled by Iſaiah, "Trees of righte-"ouſneſs, the planting of Jehovah." Ch. lxi. 3.

They are planted by the living waters of comfort, "in the houſe of God;" where under the means of grace, they "flouriſh" in hope of glory; "fenced "and incloſed by the diſcipline and orders of the "church, and by the conſequent favour and pro-"tection of heaven; their verdure is conſpicuous, "and ever conſtant, whether in the ſummer of proſ-"perity, or the winter of adverſity: their actions "and principles are ever upright and fair; yea, their "very leaf exhales a delightful perfume, by an holy "example and converſation; their affections and de-"ſires are ever aſcending towards the nobleſt and "moſt ſublime objects; the things that are above, "the glorious things of heaven." *

14. *They ſhall ſtill bring forth fruit in old age: they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing.*

Happy the man, whoſe goodneſs is always progreſſive, and whoſe virtues increaſe with his years; who loſeth not, in multiplicity of worldly cares or pleaſures, the holy fervours of his firſt love, but goeth on burning and ſhining more and more, to the end of his days. The church, like her repreſentative Sarah, is now "well ſtricken in years;" but we hope that, like her, ſhe will "ſtill bring forth "fruit in her old age;" we look for many more "children of promiſe" to be born unto Chriſt, both from among the Jews and Gentiles.

15. *To ſhew that the* LORD *is upright: he is my rock, and* there is *no unrighteouſneſs in him.*

The fruit brought forth in the church redounds to

* Eſſay on the Proper Leſſons, by Mr. Wogan, Vol. iii. p. 49.

the

the glory of God, by whom the trees, in this his new paradiſe, were planted; it ſhews to all the world, that he is juſt and "upright" in his dealings; that he is true to his promiſes; immoveable, as a "rock," in his counſels; determined to puniſh the wicked, and to reward the good; ſo that when his proceedings ſhall come to be unfolded at the laſt day, it will appear to men and angels, that "there is no "unrighteouſneſs in him."

XVIII DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XCIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Jews acknowledge, that the kingdom of Meſſiah is propheſied of in this Pſalm, and in all thoſe which follow, to the hundredth. 1, 2. The church celebrates the majeſty, power, and glory of the eternal King; 3. deſcribes the danger ſhe is often in from perſecutions, &c. but 4. ſtrengtheneth herſelf in God her Saviour, whoſe houſe 5. ought to be, like himſelf, full of truth and holineſs.

1. *The* LORD *reigneth, he is cloathed with majeſty, the* LORD *is cloathed with ſtrength,* wherewith *he hath girded himſelf: the world alſo is eſtabliſhed, that it cannot be moved.*

From the beginning, God, as Creator, was ſovereign Lord of the univerſe. He was alſo formerly, in a more eſpecial manner, King of Iſrael. But ſince that time, a new and ſpiritual kingdom hath been erected by Jeſus Chriſt, as Redeemer, whom the church now celebrates, and whoſe praiſes ſhe ſings continually. Riſen from the dead, and aſcended into heaven, the Lord Jeſus reigneth, and ſhall reign, "till he hath put all enemies under his feet." 1 Cor. xv. 25. By the glorification of his human nature, he is "cloathed with majeſty; All power is "given unto him in heaven and in earth;" Matt. xxviii. 18. ſo that he is "girded with ſtrength;" and through that ſtrength, he hath "eſtabliſhed" the new "world," that is to ſay, his church, that it "cannot be moved," or ſubverted, by all the powers of earth and hell.

2. *Thy throne is eſtabliſhed of old; thou* art *from everlaſting.*

Earthly thrones are temporary; they are ſet up, and caſt down again, neither is any truſt to be repoſed in them. But the throne of Chriſt is eternal and unchangeable. Conſtituted before the foundation of the world, it is to endure when no traces of ſuch a ſyſtem having once exiſted, ſhall any more be found.

3. *The floods have lifted up,* O LORD, *the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.* 4. *The* LORD *on high* is *mightier than the noiſe of many waters,* yea, than *the mighty waves of the ſea.*

In the firſt of theſe verſes, the church appears, like a ſhip in a ſtormy ſea, to which ſhe is often compared.

compared. Perſecutions and afflictions are thoſe "floods," thoſe "waves" of this troubleſome world, which threaten every moment to overwhelm and ſink her. With a fearful and deſponding tone of voice, therefore ſhe crieth out, "The floods have lifted "up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their "voice, the floods lift up their waves!" But immediately ſhe ſtrengtheneth and comforteth herſelf in the Lord her God; "The LORD on high is "mightier than the noiſe of many waters, yea, than "the mighty waves of the ſea:" He can ſay to ſorrows and temptations, as he doth to the waters of the ocean, "Peace, be ſtill; hitherto ſhall ye come, but "no farther;" and his word is with equal power, in both caſes.

5. *Thy teſtimonies are very ſure: holineſs becometh thine houſe, O* LORD, *for ever.*

God's "teſtimonies" are the promiſes made in Scripture to the church, that he will be with her, during the afflictions which befall her here below, and will, in time, deliver her out of all her troubles. Theſe "teſtimonies are very ſure;" theſe promiſes do not, they cannot fail. "Holineſs," therefore, which conſiſteth in obedience and patience, "be-"cometh," is the proper ornament, grace, and beauty of "his houſe," and of Chriſtians, thoſe living ſtones that compoſe it. Sacred and inviolable is the word of our King; ſacred and inviolable ſhould be the loyalty of his ſubjects.

PSALM XCIV.

ARGUMENT.

The Pſalmiſt, complaining of corrupt and troublous times, in the perſon of the church, 1—4. prayeth for the downfal of proſperous wickedneſs; 5, 6. he deſcribeth the cruelty, and 7—11. reproveth the atheiſtical folly of thoſe who perſecute God's people; 12, 13. he extolleth the bleſſedneſs of the perſecuted, if they are endued with faith and patience, inaſmuch as 14, 15. the divine promiſe and their future reward are certain; he therefore 16—19. throweth himſelf wholly upon God, whoſe mercies never fail, who 20, 21. cannot be on the ſide of iniquity, but 22, 23. will preſerve his ſaints, and deſtroy their enemies.

1. O LORD *God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God to whom vengeance belongeth, ſhew thyſelf.* 2. *Lift up thyſelf, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.*

The church, however unjuſtly oppreſſed and afflicted, remembereth that "vengeance belongeth" not to her, had ſhe the power to inflict it, but "to God" only, who hath ſaid "Vengeance is mine, I will re-"pay." Rom. xii. 19. To him, therefore, ſhe maketh her ſupplication, that he would manifeſt his glory

glory in her ſalvation; that he would aſcend the tribunal, as "judge of the earth," try her cauſe, and avenge her of her inſolent and cruel perſecutors.

3. LORD, *how long ſhall the wicked, how long ſhall the wicked triumph?* 4. How long *ſhall they utter* and *ſpeak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boaſt themſelves?*

The "triumphs" of wickedneſs, the "hard "ſpeeches," taunts, and ſcoffs of infidelity againſt Chriſt, and all who belong to him, are a continual grief of heart to the faithful in the world, who deſire nothing ſo much as to ſee the empire of ſin at an end, and the kingdom of righteouſneſs eſtabliſhed. But for this great event they muſt wait with patience, until the time appointed by the Father, when the iniquities of the world and the ſufferings of the church ſhall be full. "I ſaw under the altar," ſaith the well beloved John, "the ſouls of them that "were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſti-"mony which they held. And they cried with a "loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and "true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood "on them that dwell on the earth? And white "robes were given unto every one of them, and it "was ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt yet for a "little ſeaſon, until their fellow ſervants alſo, and "their brethren, that ſhould be killed as they were, "ſhould be fulfilled." Rev. vi. 9, &c.

5. *They break in pieces thy people, O* LORD, *and afflict thine heritage.* 6. *They ſlay the widow, and ſtranger, and murder the fatherleſs.*

Some inſtances of cruelty, exerciſed by the enemies

againſt the "people and heritage" of God, are here ſpecified. "Widows, ſtrangers, and orphans" are deſtitute of the help and protection afforded by huſbands, friends, and fathers. Chriſt is become an huſband to the church, a father to her children, and the only friend to both in time of need. Elſe were we all in the ſtate of ſtrangers and orphans, expoſed, with our widowed mother, to the unrelenting malice and fury of the great oppreſſor and murderer.

7. Yet they ſay, the LORD *ſhall not ſee, neither ſhall the God of Jacob regard* it. 8. *Underſtand, ye brutiſh among the people; and* ye *fools, when will ye be wiſe?* 9. *He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee?* 10. *He that chaſtiſeth the heathen, ſhall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, ſhall not he know?* Or, *He that inſtructeth the nations, ſhall not he rebuke; even he that teacheth man knowledge?*

The Pſalmiſt informeth us, that men are encouraged in their injuſtice and villainy by a perſuaſion, that God doth not behold or regard what they do to his people. The abſurdity of ſuch a conceit is ſhewn from theſe conſiderations; that it is God who beſtoweth on man the powers of ſeeing and hearing, and therefore that he himſelf muſt needs be poſſeſſed of thoſe powers in the higheſt perfection; that it is God who hath inſtructed the world, by his revelations, in religious knowledge, and conſequently, without all doubt, he cannot be ignorant of the uſe and abuſe which men make of that his unſpeakable gift.

11. *The* LORD *knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*

So far is God from being a ſtranger to the actions, that he is privy to the firſt "thoughts" of men, from whence thoſe actions flow; he is acquainted with all their counſels againſt his church, and knoweth them to be as vain as the imagination that he is ignorant of them. The wicked can no more eſcape the hand, than they can elude the eye of heaven.

12. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt*, or, *inſtructeſt, O* LORD, *and teacheſt him out of thy law:* 13. *That thou mayeſt give him reſt from the days of adverſity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.*

Since, therefore, the ſchemes of the adverſary are vain, and the counſel of Jehovah ſhall infallibly ſtand, happy is the man, who, having learned, from the Scriptures of truth, the leſſons of faith and patience, enjoys tranquility of mind in time of trouble, while deſtruction is preparing for the impenitent. Then, when "the days of adverſity" are over, ſhall pain and ſorrow take a final leave of the righteous, to go and dwell with the wicked, to eternal ages. The former ſhall enter into the reſt and joy of their Lord, the latter into the fire prepared originally for the devil and his angels.

14. *For the* LORD *will not caſt off his people, neither will he forſake his inheritance.* 15. *But judgment ſhall return unto righteouſneſs: and all the upright in heart ſhall follow it.*

The faith and patience of the ſaints are built upon the foundation of God's promiſe not to "caſt "off and forſake," however he may chaſten and correct,

correct, his "people and inheritance." At a fit time, "judgment ſhall return to righteouſneſs," which it might ſeem to have forſaken; iniquitous oppreſſors ſhall meet with the puniſhment they have deſerved, and the faithful ſhall experience the promiſed redemption. For thus Dr. Hammond renders and expounds the laſt clauſe of the two verſes under conſideration—"and after this," i. e. after "judgment" ſhall have "returned to righteouſneſs, all the up-"right in heart;" i. e. it ſhall be their time; they ſhall ſucceed and flouriſh. Such were thoſe halcyon days enjoyed by the Jews, after the fall of Babylon, and their return to their own land; ſuch thoſe times of refreſhment to the church Chriſtian, when the pagan perſecutions were at an end, and the Roman empire became Chriſtian. Far tranſcendent is the felicity of a ſoul, when it exchanges the miſeries of the world for the delights of paradiſe, there to wait, with it's ſiſter ſpirits, until the bodies of ſaints ſhall paſs from the diſhonours of the grave to the glories of immortality.

16. *Who will riſe up for me againſt the evil doers? Or who will ſtand up for me againſt the workers of iniquity?* 17. *Unleſs the* LORD *had been my help, my ſoul had almoſt dwelt in ſilence.*

But in the mean ſeaſon, while "evil doers" are permitted to proſper, and "the workers of iniquity" carry on their deſigns, the prophet aſks, in the perſon of the church, who is there that will, or can protect, defend, and deliver? The anſwer is, God only can do it; "Unleſs the LORD had been my "help, my ſoul had almoſt dwelt in ſilence," or, I had

had almoſt been in the ſtate of death. How often have our ſpiritual enemies ariſen againſt us, threatening to bring us into a ſtate of eternal death, but the Lord Jeſus was our help and our ſalvation.

18. *When I ſaid, my foot ſlippeth: thy mercy, O* LORD, *held me up.*

When the child of God, walking in the ſlippery paths of life, findeth himſelf falling into temptation, if he confeſſeth his inability to ſtand his ground, and crieth out, like Peter on the water, to his heavenly Father, "Lord, ſave me, I periſh;" a merciful, gracious, and powerful hand will immediately be ſtretched out, to ſupport his ſteps, and eſtabliſh his goings.

19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul.*

The excellent Norris, in a maſterly ſermon on this verſe, has given us the following elegant and affecting paraphraſe of it—"When my mind ſallies "out into a multitude of thoughts, and thoſe "thoughts make me ſad and heavy, anxious and "ſolicitous, as preſenting to my view my own "weakneſs and infirmity, and the univerſal vanity of "all thoſe ſeeming props and ſtays, upon which my "deluded ſoul was apt to lean; the many great "calamities of life, and the much greater terrors of "death; the known miſeries of the preſent ſtate, "and the darkneſs and uncertainty of the future; "ſtill urging me with freſh arguments of ſorrow, "and opening new and new ſcenes of melancholy, "till my ſoul begins to faint and ſink under the "burthen ſhe has laid upon herſelf: when I am

"thus

" thus thoughtful, and thus ſorrowful; then it is, O " my God, that I feel the relief of thy divine re- " freſhments; I find myſelf ſupported and borne up " by the ſtrong tide of thy conſolations, which raiſe " my drooping head, ſtrike a light into my ſoul, " and make me not only diſmiſs, but even forget " that ſorrow and melancholy, which my thought- " fulneſs had brought upon me." Who, that reads this, will not thankfully take and follow the advice offered in another part of the ſame diſcourſe? " Whenever therefore thoughts ariſe in my heart, " and troubles from thoſe thoughts; when thy mind " is dark and cloudy, and all the regions of the ſoul " are overcaſt; then betake thyſelf to thy oratory, " either to thy cloſet, or the church, and there en- " tertain thy ſoul with the pleaſures of religion, and " the ſatisfactions of a clear conſcience." See Norris's Practical Diſcourſes, Vol. III. Serm. IV.

20. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowſhip with thee, which frameth miſchief by a law?*

One conſideration which affordeth comfort to the faithful under perſecution and affliction, is this, that God can never be on the ſide of oppreſſion and injuſtice, though, to anſwer wiſe and ſalutary purpoſes, he may, for a time, ſuffer them to have the dominion, and to eſtabliſh iniquity by law. A diſtinction there certainly muſt be between right and wrong; and the former muſt as certainly triumph, at the laſt day.

21. *They gather themſelves together againſt the ſoul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.*

Righteouſneſs and innocence are moſt atrocious crimes,

crimes, in the eyes of wickedneſs and guilt. For theſe crimes, Cain ſlew his brother Abel, the Jews crucified Chriſt, the pagans tortured and murdered his diſciples, and bad men in all ages have perſecuted the good. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world "hate you." 1 John iii. 13.

22. *But the* LORD *is my defence: and my God is the rock of my refuge.* 23. *And he ſhall bring upon them their own iniquity, and ſhall cut them off in their own wickedneſs; yea, the* LORD *our God ſhall cut them off.*

Jehovah is our "defence;" we fear not the fiery darts of the enemy; He is "the rock of our re-"fuge;" we bid defiance to the rage and malice of earth and hell. Armed with the ſhield of faith, and the ſword of the Spirit, we riſe ſuperior to every effort of diabolical malice, and ſecular power; waiting, in patience and hope, for the coming of that day, when He who hateth unrighteouſneſs, and with whom the throne of iniquity can have no fellowſhip, ſhall viſit the wickedneſs of the wicked upon them; when the world of the ungodly ſhall ſhare the fate of apoſtate Jeruſalem, and the righteous ſhall be glorified with their Lord and Saviour.

XIX DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XCV.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm hath been long uſed in the Chriſtian church, as a proper introduction to her holy

holy ſervices. It containeth, 1, 2. an exhortation to praiſe Jehovah, 3. for his greatneſs, 4, 5. and for his works of creation; 6. men are invited to worſhip him, as their Maker, and 7. as their Preſerver; 8—11, they are warned againſt tempting and provoking him, by the example of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs. The author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews hath taught us to conſider the Pſalm, as an addreſs to believers under the Goſpel.

1. *O come, let us ſing unto the* LORD: *let us make a joyful noiſe to the rock of our ſalvation.*

In this firſt verſe, Chriſtians now exhort and ſtir up each other, as the Jews did of old, to employ their voices in honour of Jehovah, to celebrate "the "rock of their ſalvation." Jeſus, by redeeming us from our enemies, hath opened our lips, and our mouths ought, therefore, to ſhew forth his praiſe. He is the Rock of ages, in which is opened a fountain for ſin and uncleanneſs; the Rock which attends the church in the wilderneſs, pouring forth the water of life, for her uſe and comfort; the Rock which is our fortreſs againſt every enemy, ſhadowing and refreſhing a weary land. "O come, then, let us ſing "unto this our LORD, let us make a joyful noiſe "unto this rock of our ſalvation."

2. *Let us come before his preſence with thankſgiving, and make a joyful noiſe unto him with Pſalms.*

The "preſence" of Jehovah dwelt formerly between

tween the cherubim, in a tabernacle, or temple, made with hands, whither the Iſraelites were to reſort, until God became manifeſt in the fleſh. After that time, the divine preſence left the ſynagogue, and removed into the Chriſtian church; by her we are now invited to "come before that preſence with "thankſgiving," and, while we "make a joyful "noiſe," by chanting theſe divine "Pſalms," to imitate in ſome meaſure, the heavenly choirs, who "reſt not," from their bleſſed employment of praiſing God, "day or night." Rev. iv. 8.

3. *For the* LORD *is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*

It is not without reaſon, that we are exhorted to give thanks and praiſe unto our God and King; for he is "worthy to receive glory and bleſſing:" Rev. v. 12. he is a God above all that are called by that name; above thoſe deities, which were once worſhipped by the ancient heathen; above the world, which ſtill continues to be an object of adoration among infatuated mortals. His throne is over all, and power and dominion are his.

4. *In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the ſtrength of the hills is his alſo.* 5. *The ſea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.*

The treaſures, which lie hid in the "deep places" of the earth beneath; the majeſtic pride and "ſtrength "of the hills," which tower above, and lift up their heads to heaven; the unnumbered waves of the great and wide "ſea," which roll in perpetual motion round the world; the rich and variegated produce of the "dry land," crowned with verdure and beauty; together

together with every thing that liveth, in the waters, or on the earth; all are under the government of our God; by him were all things created; by him have all things been redeemed.

6. *O come, let us worſhip, and bow down: let us kneel before the* LORD *our Maker.*

As in the beginning of the Pſalm we were called upon to "praiſe" Jehovah, ſo here we are invited to humble ourſelves before him in "prayer." From him we had our being; him, therefore, we are to ſupplicate for every other bleſſing, both in this life, and that which is to come. And ſince he made our bodies, as well as our ſouls, it is meet and right that they ſhould bear their part in his ſervice, and that internal worſhip ſhould be accompanied and ſignified by that which is external.

7. *For he is our God, and we are the people of his paſture, and the ſheep of his hand.*

An additional reaſon, why we ſhould both praiſe Jehovah, and pray to him, is the peculiar relation into which he hath been pleaſed to put himſelf by the covenant of grace; "he is our GOD;" we are the objects of his tender care, and unſpeakable love; we his "people," and his "ſheep;" his choſen flock, which he hath purchaſed with his blood, which he feeds with his Word, and refreſhes with his Spirit, in fair and pleaſant paſtures. From thoſe paſtures, O thou good Shepherd, ſuffer us not to ſtray; or, if we do ſtray, bring us ſpeedily back again, by any means, which thou, in thine infinite wiſdom, ſhalt think fit. Wholeſome is the diſcipline, which drives us into the fold, and keeps us there.

8. *To*

8. *To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderneſs,* 9. *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and ſaw my work.*

The firſt clauſe of theſe two verſes may be joined to the preceding verſe, thus, "He is our God, we "are the people of his paſture, and the ſheep of "his hand, if ye will hear his voice to-day;" that is, if ye will be his obedient people, he will continue to be your God. Or elſe, the word DN tranſlated, "if," may be rendered in the optative form. "O "that you would hear his voice to-day," ſaying unto you, "Harden not," &c. However this be, what follows, to the end of the Pſalm, is undoubtedly ſpoken in the perſon of God himſelf, who may be conſidered as addreſſing us, in theſe latter days, by the Goſpel of his Son; for ſo the Apoſtle teaches us to apply the whole paſſage, Heb. iii. iv. The Iſraelites, when they came out of Egypt, had a day of probation, and a promiſed Reſt to ſucceed it; but by unbelief and diſobedience, they to whom it was promiſed, that is, the generation of thoſe who came out of Egypt, fell ſhort of it, and died in the wilderneſs. The Goſpel, in like manner, offers, both to Jew and Gentile, another day of probation in this world, and another promiſed Reſt to ſucceed it, which remaineth for the people of God, in heaven. All whom it concerns are, therefore, exhorted to beware, leſt they forfeit the ſecond Reſt, as murmuring and rebellious Iſrael came ſhort of the firſt. The verſes now before us allude to what paſſed at the place called "Maſſah," and "Meribah," from

the people there "tempting, and ſtriving" with their God, notwithſtanding all the mighty works which he had wrought for them, before their eyes. Exod. xvii. 7.

10. *Forty years long was I grieved*, or, *diſguſted with this generation, and ſaid, it is a people that do err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways.*

O the deſperate preſumption of man, that he ſhould offend his Maker, "forty years;" O the patience and long ſuffering of his Maker, that he ſhould allow him forty years to offend in! Sin begins in the "heart," by it's deſires "wandering" and going aſtray after forbidden objects; whence follows inattention to the "ways" of God; to his diſpenſations, and our own duty. Luſt in the heart, like vapour in the ſtomach, ſoon affects the head, and clouds the underſtanding.

11. *Unto whom I ſware in my wrath, that they ſhould not enter into my reſt.*

Excluſion from Canaan was the puniſhment of Iſraelitiſh contumacy; excluſion from heaven is to be the puniſhment of diſobedience among Chriſtians. To take vengeance on thoſe who reject the Goſpel terms, is no leſs a part of the covenant and oath of God, than it is to ſave and glorify thoſe who accept them. Yet men continue deliberately to commit thoſe ſins, which the Almighty ſtandeth thus engaged to puniſh with deſtruction!* "Take heed, therefore,

* Senſus hujus loci ex Paulo ſic concinnandus: nempe requiem a Deo Iſraëlitis eſſe promiſſam in terrâ Chananæâ: omnes tamen interim in deſerto cecidiſſe hâc requie fruſtratos: quare Spiritum Sanctum per Davidem ad novam requiem invitaſſe;

" brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart
" of unbelief, in departing from the living God.
" But exhort one another daily, while it is called to
" day; leſt any of you be hardened through the de-
" ceitfulneſs of ſin. For we are made partakers of
" Chriſt, if we hold the beginning of our confidence
" ſtedfaſt unto the end; while it is ſaid, To day, if
" ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as
" in the provocation. For ſome, when they had
" heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came
" out of Egypt by Moſes. But with whom was he
" grieved forty years? Was it not with them that
" had ſinned, whoſe carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs?
" And to whom ſware he, that they ſhould not enter
" into his reſt, but to them that believed not? So
" we ſee that they could not enter in becauſe of un-
" belief. Let us therefore fear, leſt, a promiſe being
" made us of entering into his reſt, any of you
" ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it. For unto us
" was the Goſpel preached, as well as unto them;
" but the word preached did not profit them, not
" being mixed with faith in them that heard it."
Heb. iii. 12, &c.

taſſe; ad novum illud ſabbatum ab ipſo mundi exordio dici ſeptimæ requie figuratum, novumque indixiſſe diem quo ſub Chriſto, in Eccleſiâ, ac cæleſti patriâ quieſceremus, niſi eſſemus increduli: unde ſic concludit Paulus: " Feſtinemus ingredi in illam requi-
" em." BOSSUET.

PSALM XCVI.

ARGUMENT.

By common conſent of Jews and Chriſtians, we apply this Pſalm to the times of Meſſiah. 1—4. Men are exhorted to ſing his praiſes; to declare his ſalvation; 4, 5. to acknowledge his ſupremacy over the gods of the nations, with 6. the glory and beauty of his ſanctuary; 7—9, to give him the honour, the worſhip, and the obedience due unto him, and 10. to publiſh the glad tidings of his kingdom being eſtabliſhed: 11—13. the whole creation is called upon to rejoice at this great event. We find, by 1 Chron. xvi. that David delivered out this Pſalm, to be ſung on occaſion of temporal bleſſings, prefigurative of future ſpiritual ones.

1. *O ſing unto the* LORD *a new ſong; ſing unto the* LORD, *all the earth.*

Jehovah, our Redeemer, is the perſon whoſe praiſes are to be ſung. They are to be ſung in a "new" ſong; a ſong calculated to celebrate new mercies, prefigured by old ones wrought for Iſrael in former times; a ſong fit for the voices of renewed and regenerate men to ſing in the new Jeruſalem, in thoſe new heavens and that new earth, which conſtitute the

the new creation, or kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt. And as the mercies of God are univerſal, extending themſelves not only to the Jews, but to all the nations of the earth, all the nations of the earth are therefore exhorted to bear a part in this new ſong; "Sing unto the LORD a new ſong: ſing unto the "LORD, all the earth." Thus St. John, after reckoning up the 144000, or full number of thoſe who were ſealed to ſalvation from among the tribes of Iſrael, proceeds to tell us, that he "beheld, and lo, a "great multitude, which no man could number, of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, "ſtood before the throne and before the Lamb, "cloathed with white robes, and palms in their "hands." All theſe ſung a new ſong, which none could learn but the redeemed; they "cried with a "loud voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God which "ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." See Rev. v. vii. xiv.

2. *Sing unto the* LORD, *bleſs his name: ſhew forth his ſalvation from day to day.*

Again are we excited to ſing unto the Lord JESUS, and in Pſalms and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, to bleſs his ſaving NAME. The latter clauſe of the verſe is very expreſſive in the original, בשרו "Preach," or "Evangelize his ſalvation from day to day;" let it be the conſtant theme of all your diſcourſes; publiſh it to the world in every poſſible way, by your words, and by your actions; and while God allows you breath and life, let one day tranſmit the

glorious employment to another, until it be reſumed and continued in heaven, to all eternity.

3. *Declare his glory among the heathen; his wonders among all people.*

The "glory" of Meſſiah in his incarnation, his life, his death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and kingdom; the "wonders" or miracles by him wrought upon the bodies and ſouls of men; theſe were the things "declared among the heathen," even "among all "people," by the Apoſtles and their ſucceſſors; theſe things are ſtill declared, by the Scriptures read, and ſermons preached in the church, which was gathered originally from among the Gentiles.

4. *For the* LORD *is great, and greatly to be praiſed: he* is *to be feared above all gods.* 5. *For all the gods of the nations are idols:* or, *things of nought, but it is the* LORD *that made the heavens.*

Chriſt is to be celebrated, his glory and wonders are to be declared, becauſe he is, in every poſſible ſenſe, "great;" great in dignity, in power, in mercy; and therefore "greatly to be praiſed" by every creature. The heavens and heavenly bodies, adored by the nations, were no gods, but the works of "his" hands, who hath fixed his everlaſting throne high above them all. At the publication of the Goſpel, idolatry fell before it; and what is the world itſelf, but one great idol, which is to fall, and diſappear, in like manner?

6. *Honour and majeſty are before him; ſtrength and beauty are in his ſanctuary.*

What are the ſplendor and magnificence of earthly courts,

courts, when compared with that glory and majeſty, the unutterable brightneſs of which fills the court of the heavenly King? Some portion of this celeſtial light is communicated, through grace, to the Chriſtian church, which is deſcribed by St. John, under images borrowed from the figurative ſanctuary, and the earthly Jeruſalem, as an edifice compoſed of gold and precious ſtones, illuminated by the glory of God and the Lamb, reſiding in the midſt of it. See Rev. xxi.

7. *Give unto the* LORD, *O ye kindreds*, or, *families*, or, *tribes of the people, give unto the* LORD *glory and ſtrength.* 8. *Give unto the* LORD *the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.* 9. *O worſhip the* LORD *in the beauty of holineſs: fear before him all the earth.*

In theſe three verſes, the tribes of the ſpiritual Iſrael are enjoined to aſcribe to their Redeemer all "glory and ſtrength," as eſſentially inherent in him and by him communicated to his people; to give him the entire "glory of his name," and of that "ſalvation" imported by it; to bring the "ſacri-"fices" of the new law, and to aſſemble in the "courts" of his houſe; to worſhip him in that "beauty of holineſs," which is conſtituted by the regular and ſolemn ſervices of the church; to "fear" and obey him, as the ſubjects of a King inveſted with plenitude of power in heaven and earth.

10. *Say among the heathen, that the* LORD *reigneth: the world alſo ſhall be eſtabliſhed that it ſhall not be moved: he ſhall judge the people righteouſly.*

In other words—Make proclamation, therefore,

O ye Apoſtles and preachers of the Goſpel, that a new and eternal kingdom is erected; the uſurped empire of Satan is overthrown, and the Lord Jeſus, having redeemed mankind, reigneth in the hearts of his people by faith; a community is formed, not upon the plan of ſecular policy, but upon the divine principle of heavenly love; it is eſtabliſhed on immoveable foundations, nor ſhall the gates of hell prevail againſt it; righteouſneſs ſhall dwell in it, ſince He, who is the King of Righteouſneſs, preſides, directs, and determines all things, by his Word, and his Spirit.

11. *Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the ſea roar, and the fulneſs thereof:* 12. *Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it: then ſhall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.*

Tranſported with a view of theſe grand events, and beholding in Spirit the advent of King Meſſiah, the Pſalmiſt exults in moſt jubilant and triumphant ſtrains, calling the whole creation to break forth into joy, and to celebrate the glories of redemption. The heavens, with the innumerable orbs fixed in them, which, while they roll and ſhine, declare the glory of beatified ſaints; the earth, which, made fertile by celeſtial influences, ſheweth the work of grace on the hearts of men here below; the field, which, crowned with a produce of an hundred fold, diſplayeth an emblem of the fruit yielded by the ſeed of the Word in the church; the trees of the wood, lofty, verdant, and diffuſive, apt repreſentatives of holy perſons, thoſe "trees of righteouſneſs, the planting

"planting of Jehovah," Iſai. lxi. 3. whoſe examples are eminent, fair, and extenſive; all theſe are, by the prophet, excited to join in a chorus of thankſgiving to the Maker and Redeemer of the world.

13. *For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he ſhall judge the world with righteouſneſs, and the people with his truth.*

The coming of Chriſt is twofold; firſt, he came to ſanctify the creature, and he will come again to glorify it. Either of his kingdoms, that of grace, or that of glory, may be ſignified by his "judging the "world in righteouſneſs and truth." If creation be repreſented, as rejoicing at the eſtabliſhment of the former, how much greater will the joy be at the approach of the latter, ſeeing that, notwithſtanding Chriſt be long ſince come in the fleſh, though he be aſcended into heaven, and have ſent the Spirit from thence, yet "the whole creation," as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, Rom. viii. 22. "groaneth and travaileth in "pain together until now, expecting to be delivered, "from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious "liberty of the ſons of God. And not only they, "but ourſelves alſo, which have the firſt fruits of "the Spirit, even we ourſelves groan within our-"ſelves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the re-"demption of the body;" when, at the renovation of all things, man, new made, ſhall return to the days of his youth, to begin an immortal ſpring, and be for ever young.

PSALM

PSALM XCVII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, 1. the reign of Chriſt is again celebrated, and the nations are again called to rejoice on that account: 2—7. He is deſcribed as taking vengeance on his enemies, overthrowing idolatry in the heathen world, commanding adoration from all creatures, and 8, 9. inſpiring gladneſs into the church, by ſubduing her enemies: 10—12. The duties of holineſs, thankfulneſs, and religious joy, are inculcated.

1. *The* LORD *reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of the iſles be glad thereof.*

Triumphant over death and hell, the Lord Jeſus is gone up on high, and "reigneth." What greater cauſe can the whole earth have to "rejoice;" yea, even the moſt diſtant iſles of the Gentiles, to "be "glad," and to ſing for joy; ſince they are all become his ſubjects, and ſhare the unſpeakable bleſſings of ſo gracious a reign. We Britons, as inhabiting one of thoſe heathen iſles, and enjoying ſo fair a portion of evangelical bleſſings, have reaſon to repeat this verſe, with a particular pleaſure and energy. The Hebrews called by the name of "iſles," אִיִּים, not only countries ſurrounded by the ſea, but all the countries which the ſea divided from them; ſo that the

the term became ſynonymous with "Gentiles." Thus, it is ſaid, Iſai. xlii. 4. "The ISLES ſhall wait "for his law;" which paſſage, Matt. xii. 21. is expounded as follows, "In him ſhall the GENTILES "truſt."

2. *Clouds and darkneſs* are *round about him: righteouſneſs and judgment* are *the habitation*, or, *eſtabliſhment of his throne.*

When the mercy and grace of our heavenly King are to be deſcribed, he is likened to the ſun ſhining in a clear firmament, and gladdening univerſal nature with his benificent rays. But when we are to conceive an idea of him, as going forth, in "juſtice "and judgment," to diſcomfit and puniſh his adverſaries, the imagery is then borrowed from a troubled ſky; he is pictured as ſurrounded by "clouds and "darkneſs;" from whence iſſue lightenings and thunders, ſtorms and tempeſts, affrighting and confounding the wicked and impenitent.

3. *A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.* 4. *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth ſaw and trembled.* 5. *The hills melted like wax at the preſence of the* LORD: *at the preſence of the* LORD *of the whole earth.*

The judgments of God, and their effects upon the world, are here ſet forth, under the uſual ſimilitude of lightning and fire from heaven, cauſing the earth to tremble, and the mountains to melt and diſſolve away. The exaltation of Chriſt to the throne of his kingdom, was followed by a dreadful diſplay of that vengeance, which broke in pieces the Jewiſh nation, and brought their civil and religious polity

to

to an utter diſſolution. In the hiſtory of their deſtruction, the world of the ungodly may view a ſtriking picture of the great and terrible day, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall render a recompenſe to all his enemies. He is then to deſcend in flaming fire; lightnings ſhall be his harbingers; the earth ſhall tremble; and the hills ſhall, literally, "melt like "wax, at the preſence of Jehovah."

6. *The heavens declare his righteouſneſs: and all the people ſee his glory.*

"The heavens," by the manifeſtation of vengeance from thence, reveal, "declare," and proclaim the "righteous" judgments of Meſſiah; and "all the "people" upon earth are witneſſes of the "glory" of his victory, over every thing that oppoſeth itſelf to the eſtabliſhment of his kingdom. This will be more eminently the caſe at the ſecond advent, when the trumpet of the archangel ſhall proclaim his approach in the clouds of heaven, and all the tribes of the earth ſhall ſee him coming in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

7. *Confounded be*, or, *ſhall be all they that ſerve graven images; that boaſt themſelves of idols: worſhip him, all ye gods.*

When Jeſus was exalted, his Goſpel publiſhed, and his power and glory made known in the heathen world, men grew "aſhamed" of their "images, and "boaſted themſelves in their idols" no more. The laſt clauſe of our verſe, "Worſhip him, all ye gods," declares the ſupremacy of Chriſt, over all that are called gods, אלהים, in heaven and in earth, who are enjoined

enjoined to pay adoration unto him, inſtead of claiming it for themſelves.

8. *Sion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced; becauſe of thy judgments,* O LORD.
9. *For thou,* LORD, *art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.*

The inhabitants of the new "Sion," or the people of God, "heard" the tidings, that idols and idolatry were fallen, and the Lord Jeſus reigned triumphant; they heard, and "were glad; the "daughters of Judah," or Chriſtian churches, "re-"joiced" in the Holy Ghoſt, with joy unſpeakable, "becauſe of theſe judgments" of their God upon his enemies, whereby he evinced himſelf ſuperior to the powers of the earth, and the gods of the nations. Thus, at the fall of Babylon, it is ſaid, Rev. xviii. 20. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy "Apoſtles and Prophets, for God hath avenged you "on her." And Euſebius ſpeaks, in the following terms, of the times under Conſtantine, which ſucceeded the overthrow of Maxentius and Maximin; "A bright and glorious day, no cloud overſhadow-"ing it, did enlighten, with rays of heavenly light, "the churches of Chriſt over all the earth;—and "among all Chriſtians there was an inexpreſſible "joy, and a kind of celeſtial gladneſs." Eccleſiaſt. Hiſt. B. x.

10. *Ye that love the* LORD, *hate evil: he preſerveth the ſouls of his ſaints, he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*

Having ſung the glory of the Redeemer, the Pſalmiſt delineates the duty of the redeemed. They

are

are characteriſed by their "love of God;" they are enjoined to "hate evil;" this hatred is, indeed, a conſequence, and a ſure proof of that love, when it is genuine and ſincere. Religion muſt be rooted in the heart, and ſpring from thence. A Chriſtian muſt not only ſerve God outwardly, but muſt inwardly "love" him; he muſt not content himſelf with abſtaining from overt acts of ſin, but muſt truly "hate" it. They who do ſo, are "the ſaints "of God, whoſe ſouls he preſerveth" from evil, and will finally "deliver" from the evil one, and his aſſociates, by a happy death, and a glorious reſurrection.

11. *Light is ſown for the righteous: and gladneſs for the upright in heart.*

However gloomy our proſpect may at any time be, let us wait patiently, as the huſbandman doth, all the winter, in expectation of a future crop, from the ſeed which lieth buried in the earth. "Light "and gladneſs are ſown for the righteous and true "hearted," though they may not yet appear; the ſeed-time is in this world; the harveſt will be in that to come. "In due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint "not." Gal. vi. 9.

12. *Rejoice in the* LORD, *ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs.*

Tribulation itſelf, therefore, ſhould not prevent our "rejoicing in Jehovah our righteouſneſs," who juſtifieth us from our ſins; no adverſity ought to make us negligent in celebrating, with thankſgiving, the "commemorations of his holineſs," which the Church hath appointed to be obſerved; to the end that

that we may alway remember, with gratitude, how great things he hath done for us already, and reflect with comfort, on thoſe much greater things, which he hath promiſed to do for us hereafter.

XIX DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XCVIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this evangelical hymn, the Prophet, 1—3. extols the miracles, the victory, the ſalvation, the righteouſneſs, the mercy, and truth of the Redeemer; on account of which, 4—9. he calls upon man, and the whole creation, to rejoice, and praiſe Jehovah.

1. *O ſing unto the* LORD *a new ſong, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.*

New mercies and wonders demand new ſongs. And what mercies, what wonders, can be compared with thoſe wrought by the holy Jeſus? "Go and "tell John," ſaith he to John's diſciples; go and tell all the world, ſaith he to his own diſciples, "the things which ye ſee, and hear;" the marvellous things which I do to the bodies, and to the ſouls of men. "The blind receive their ſight," and the ignorant minds are enlightened with knowledge;

ledge; "the lame walk," and ſtrength is communicated to impotent ſouls; "the lepers are cleanſed," and the laſcivious rendered chaſte; "the deaf hear," and the obſtinate liſten to inſtruction and reproof; "the dead are raiſed," and ſinners juſtified; "the "Goſpel is preached," and the world converted. "His own right hand, and his holy arm," hath done theſe marvellous things, without and againſt all worldly power; not by ſpear and ſword, but by patience and charity, he hath "gotten the victory," and gained the glorious day.

2. *The* LORD *hath made known his ſalvation: his righteouſneſs hath he openly ſhewed in the ſight of the heathen.*

The "ſalvation" of Jehovah was "made known" by the preaching of Chriſt himſelf in Judea, for the ſpace of three years; his "righteouſneſs," whereby ſinners are juſtified, was "openly ſhewed," by the ſermons of his Apoſtles, "in the ſight of the hea-"then." Still let that ſalvation be made known, ſtill let that righteouſneſs be openly ſhewed, by the miniſters of the Goſpel, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in, and the remnant of the Jews converted; until antichriſt be overthrown, and Death himſelf fallen before the all-conquering croſs.

3. *He hath remembered his mercy and truth towards the houſe of Iſrael; all the ends of the earth have ſeen the ſalvation of our God.*

In ſending the Meſſiah, God ſhewed himſelf mindful of the promiſes, which "mercy" prompted him to make, and "truth" required him to perform. Theſe promiſes were made to "the houſe of "Iſrael;"

"Iſrael;" to the loſt ſheep of that houſe, Chriſt declared himſelf ſent; and the Apoſtles offered ſalvation firſt to the Jews: but to them it was never intended that evangelical bleſſings ſhould be confined. The Prophets ſpake in plain terms of the call of the Gentiles, who were to be adopted into the holy family, and made the children of Abraham. The Goſpel was accordingly preached to the nations, the Apoſtles made their progreſs through the world, and "all the ends of the earth ſaw the ſalvation of God." The Jews fell from the faith of their fathers, and, to this day, continue in their apoſtaſy. And are not the Gentiles, in their turn, falling away, after the ſame example of unbelief? "Remember," yet once again, O Lord, thy "mercy and truth toward the "houſe of Iſrael;" yet once again let "all the ends "of the earth ſee thy ſalvation."

4. *Make a joyful noiſe unto the* LORD, *all the earth; make a loud noiſe, and rejoice, and ſing praiſe.* 5. *Sing unto the* LORD *with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a Pſalm.* 6. *With trumpets and ſound of cornet make a joyful noiſe before the* LORD *the king.*

The Pſalmiſt, beholding in Spirit the accompliſhment of the promiſes, the advent of Chriſt, and the glory of his kingdom, thinks it criminal in any creature to be ſilent; he bids the whole earth break forth into joy, and exult in God her Saviour, with every token of gratitude and thankfulneſs; with voices, and inſtruments of all kinds, in perfect harmony, with tempers and affections according in like manner, men are enjoined to ſound aloud the praiſes of their great Redeemer.

7. *Let the ſea roar, and the fulneſs thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.* 8. *Let the floods clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together* 9. *Before the* LORD; *for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the world, and the people with equity.*

The inanimate parts of creation are called upon to bear their parts in the new ſong, and to fill up the univerſal chorus of praiſe and thankſgiving, in honour of him that ſitteth upon the throne. Or, perhaps, the converted heathen nations are intended under the figures of the "ſea," the "rivers," and the "hills," and their exultations expreſſed by the noiſe of many waters, their beauty and fruitfulneſs by thoſe of the hills, when, crowned with plenty, they, as it were, laugh and ſing, at the approach of harveſt. The ſubject of this general joy is, as before, in Pſ. xcvi. 13. the advent of Meſſiah to reform the world, to execute judgment upon the wicked, and to eſtabliſh a kingdom of righteouſneſs upon the earth. We expect his ſecond advent to reſtore all things, to judge the world, to condemn his enemies, and to begin his "glorious" reign. Then ſhall heaven and earth rejoice, and the joy of the redeemed ſhall be full.

PSALM XCIX.

ARGUMENT.

Under images borrowed from the old diſpenſation, the Prophet celebrates 1. the reign of Meſſiah,

Meſſiah, and the ſubmiſſion of his enemies; 2—4. his exaltation, holineſs, power, and juſtice; which 5. men are exhorted to acknowledge and adore. 6—9. The examples of Moſes, Aaron, and Samuel are introduced, to encourage us in worſhipping and ſerving our God and Saviour.

1. *The* LORD *reigneth, let the people tremble: he ſitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved,* or, *bow.*

Jehovah reigneth in the Chriſtian church, as he did of old in the Jewiſh temple; when he appeared between the cherubims in the holy of holies, in the form and likeneſs of a MAN, encompaſſed with "glory:" Ezek. i. 26. Numb. vii. 89. he ſubdued the enemies of Iſrael, when they raged moſt furiouſly againſt his people; he will alſo bring into ſubjection the adverſaries of the Goſpel, and finally render us victorious over the powers of darkneſs. The paſſions and affections may mutiny and rebel; but if Chriſt reign in the heart by faith, they muſt ſoon tremble and ſubmit.

2. *The* LORD *is great in Sion, and he is high above all people.* 3. *Let them praiſe thy great and terrible name: for it is holy.*

The power and pre-eminence of the Redeemer, whom no creature is able to reſiſt, are reaſons why all ſhould ſave themſelves, by yielding in time to his ſceptre; by taking the benefit of his protection, inſtead of incurring his diſpleaſure; by "praiſing "his great, terrible, and holy name," inſtead of

ſuffering the almighty vengeance, which he, who owns that Name, can inflict.

4. *The King's ſtrength alſo loveth judgment, thou doſt eſtabliſh equity, thou executeſt judgment and righteouſneſs in Jacob.* 5. *Exalt ye the* LORD *our God, and worſhip at his footſtool: for he is holy.*

For although the "ſtrength" of our King be infinite, yet is it never exerted, but in "righteouſ-"neſs" and juſt "judgment," which are his delight; they compoſe the firm baſis of his throne, and direct his whole adminiſtration. Impenitent rebels muſt feel the weight of his arm, and none can accuſe the juſtice of their puniſhment: but in all other caſes, he is "mighty only to ſave." Iſai. lxiii. 1. This holineſs of his proceedings, this due temperament of juſtice with mercy, the redeemed are exhorted to acknowledge and to proclaim, falling down before the throne, and uttering the angelical triſagion, "Holy, "Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and "is, and is to come."

6. *Moſes and Aaron among his prieſts*, or, *chief rulers, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the* LORD, *and he anſwered them.* 7. *He ſpake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his teſtimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.*

To encourage the faithful in the worſhip of God, the examples of Moſes, Aaron, and Samuel are adduced, men of like infirmities with ourſelves, whoſe prayers were heard, both for themſelves and others, and anſwers were returned to them from the myſtic "cloud," that ſymbol of the divine preſence, which, for a while, was itinerant with the camp in the wil-

derneſs,

derneſs, and then became fixed in the tabernacle at Shiloh, till it's laſt removal to mount Sion. Theſe men were heard through the interceſſion of the great Mediator, whom they repreſented. Through that ſame interceſſion, our prayers alſo are heard, if we "keep his teſtimonies, and the ordinances that he "hath given us."

8. *Thou anſwereſt them, O* LORD *our God; thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, though thou tookeſt vengeance of their inventions.*

The conſtruction of the verſe ſeems to be this. "O Lord our God, thou didſt hear, or anſwer "them," that is, the aforementioned typical mediators, Moſes, Aaron, and Samuel; "thou be-"cameſt a forbearing God for them," or, at their interceſſion; and that, "even when puniſhing," or, when thou hadſt begun to puniſh, "the wicked "deeds of them," that is, not of Moſes, Aaron, and Samuel, but of the people, who had tranſgreſſed, and for whom they interceded. This was the caſe, when Moſes interceded for the idolaters; Exod. xxxii. 32. Aaron for the ſchiſmatics; Numb. xvi. 47. and Samuel for the whole nation. 1 Sam. vii. 9. "Pray one for another," ſaith an Apoſtle to Chriſtians, "that ye may be healed: the effectual fervent "prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James v. 16.

9. *Exalt the* LORD *our God, and worſhip at his holy hill: for the* LORD *our God is holy.*

The Pſalmiſt repeats his exhortation, enforced by the preceding examples of Moſes, Aaron, and Samuel, and again invites all people to worſhip a

"holy" God in a "holy" place, and to adore the conſummate rectitude of all his proceedings, ſinging with the Spirits above, "Great and marvellous "are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and "true are thy ways, thou King of Saints." Rev. xv. 3.

PSALM C.

ARGUMENT.

The Pſalmiſt invites all the world to join with the Iſraelites in the ſervice of him who was kind and gracious to them beyond expreſſion. Accordingly, we Chriſtians now properly uſe this Pſalm in acknowledgment of God's wonderful love to us in Chriſt; by whom we offer up continually ſpiritual ſacrifices, for redeeming us by the ſacrifice which he made of himſelf; for making the world anew, and creating us again unto good works; according to his faithful promiſes, which we may depend upon for ever. PATRICK.

1. *Make a joyful noiſe unto the* LORD, *all ye lands*: 2. *Serve the* LORD *with gladneſs: come before his preſence with ſinging.*

The prophet addreſſeth himſelf to "all lands," or to "all the earth;" to Gentiles, as well as Jews. He exhorteth them to "make a joyful noiſe," a noiſe like that of the trumpets at the time of jubilee, a ſound

ſound of univerſal triumph and exultation, in honour of "Jehovah," now become their Lord and Saviour. The ſervice of this our Maſter is perfect freedom; it is a ſervice of love, a freedom from Pharaoh and the taſkmaſters, from Satan and our own imperious luſts; it is a redemption from the moſt cruel bondage, into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. Let us therefore do as we are commanded; let us "ſerve the Lord with gladneſs;" and when we "come before his preſence" in the temple, let it be "with ſinging" to the praiſe and glory of our Redeemer. Thus he is ſerved in heaven, and thus he delighteth to be ſerved on earth.

3. *Know ye that the* LORD *he is God,* it is *he* that *hath made us, and not we ourſelves; we are his people, and the ſheep of his paſture.* Or, *He hath made us, and we are his,* his people, and the ſheep of his paſture.*

The motives here urged for ſerving and praiſing Jehovah, are the ſame with thoſe above, in Pſ. xcv. 6, 7. namely, that he is our "God," engaged by covenant on our behalf; that his hands created us, and have ſince new created us; that we ſtand in the peculiar relation of his "people," whom he hath choſen to himſelf, and over whom he preſideth as King; that we are "the ſheep of his paſture," for whom the good ſhepherd laid down his life, and whom he nouriſheth, by the word and ſacraments,

* "I am perſuaded that the Maſoretical correction לו (and "we are *his*) is right: the conſtruction and paralleliſm both fa-"vour it." Biſhop LOWTH. A correſpondent ſuggeſts—Might not the clauſe be rendered interrogatively—"Are not we his "people, and the ſheep of his paſture?"

unto eternal life. Theſe are points which every Chriſtian ought to "know" and believe, unto his ſoul's health. And whoever doth know them aright, will ever be ready with heart and voice to obey the injunction which followeth in the next verſe.

4. *Enter into his gates with thankſgiving, and into his courts with praiſe: be thankful unto him, and bleſs his name.*

The Chriſtian Church is a temple, whoſe "gates" ſtand continually open, for the admiſſion of the nations from all the four quarters of the world. Rev. xxi. 13. 25. Into the "courts" of this temple, which are now truly "courts of the Gentiles," all men are invited to come, and offer their evangelical ſacrifices of "confeſſion and praiſe;" to expreſs their gratitude to their Saviour, and "bleſs" his gracious and hallowed "name." How glorious will be that day, which ſhall behold the everlaſting gates of heaven lifting up their heads, and diſcloſing to view thoſe courts above, into which the children of the reſurrection are to enter, there, with angels and archangels, to dwell and ſing for evermore!

5. *For the* LORD *is good; his mercy is everlaſting: and his truth endureth to all generations.*

"Jehovah is good;" he is the ſource of all beauty and perfection in the creature; how altogether lovely muſt he needs be in himſelf! "His mercy is "everlaſting," extending through time into eternity; "and his truth," or fidelity in accompliſhing his promiſes, "endureth to all generations," evidenced to the whole race of mankind, from Adam to his laſt born

born ſon. The Pſalms, which celebrate theſe attributes, will never, therefore, be out of date, but each ſucceſſive generation will chant them with freſh propriety, and freſh delight, until by ſaints and angels they are ſung new in the kingdom of God.

PSALM CI.

ARGUMENT.

In the perſon of David, advanced to the throne of Iſrael, we hear King Meſſiah declaring how he intended to walk, and to govern his houſehold the church, and alſo deſcribing the qualifications which he ſhould require in his miniſters and ſervants.

1. *I will ſing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O* LORD, *will I ſing.*

David, having determined to ſing unto Jehovah, chuſeth for his theme "mercy and judgment;" either that mercy which God had ſhewn to him, and that judgment which had been inflicted on his enemies; or elſe, that upright adminiſtration of mercy and judgment, with which he himſelf intended to bleſs his people. The righteous adminiſtration of mercy and judgment in the kingdom of Meſſiah, is a topic, on which his ſubjects always expatiate with pleaſure and profit. His mercy encourageth the greateſt

greateſt of ſinners to hope; his judgments forbid the beſt of men to preſume.

2. *I will behave myſelf wiſely in a perfect way; O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my houſe with a perfect heart.*

In return for the favours of heaven, we hear the Iſraelitiſh monarch declaring his reſolution, to ſet his court and kingdom an example of true wiſdom, and unſhaken integrity; at the ſame time, ſighing for that viſitation of divine grace, which alone could enable him to put his reſolution in practice—"O when "wilt thou come unto me?" This was ever the voice of the church, longing for the preſence of God in human nature, "O when wilt thou come unto "me?" And this muſt ever be the wiſh of a Chriſtian, who knoweth that though in himſelf he be nothing, yet that he can do all things through Chriſt, who ſtrengtheneth him by his Spirit in the inner man. Meſſiah was the only King of Iſrael, whoſe life held forth to his ſubjects a perfect pattern of wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and whoſe death procured them grace, in their different meaſures and degrees, to follow it.

3. *I will ſet no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aſide, it ſhall not cleave unto me.*

"I will ſet no wicked thing before mine eyes;" that is, I will not propoſe to myſelf, or think of carrying into execution, any iniquitous ſcheme of politics, however advantageous and tempting it may appear; I will turn away my eyes and my attention, and reject it at once: "I hate the work of them that

"turn

"turn aſide;" of them who, in their counſels and their actions, deviate from the divine law, to ſerve their own intereſt; "it ſhall not cleave unto me;" no ſuch corrupt principle ſhall adhere to my ſoul, or find a place in my affections. How noble a reſolution for a king to make; but how difficult an one for a king to keep? Thou only, O King of Righteouſneſs, didſt never ſet any wicked thing before thine eyes; thou only hadſt a perfect averſion to the ways of tranſgreſſors.

4. *A froward heart ſhall depart from me: I will not know a wicked* perſon.

As is the king, ſo will be the court; as is the maſter of the houſe, ſuch will be thoſe of his houſehold. David, having reſolved to "walk within his houſe "with a perfect," a ſincere and upright "heart," determines at the ſame time to expel from thence all, whoſe hearts were perverted and depraved: as he would "ſet no wicked thing before his eyes," ſo neither would he form any connections with "wick-"ed perſons;" they ſhould not be of his acquaintance, much leſs ſhould they be his favourites. In the ſame manner ſpeaketh our heavenly King, with regard to the appointment of his miniſters and ſervants—"I know you not, whence you are; depart "from me, all ye workers of iniquity." Luke xiii. 27.

5. *Whoſo privily ſlandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look, and a proud,* or, *extended, and* therefore *inſatiable heart, will not I ſuffer.*

Detraction

Detraction, ambition, and avarice, are three weeds which ſpring and flouriſh in the rich ſoil of a court. The Pſalmiſt declareth his reſolution to undertake the difficult taſk of eradicating them, for the benefit of his people, that Iſraelites might not be harraſſed by informers, or oppreſſed by inſolent and rapacious miniſters. Shall we imagine theſe vices leſs odious in the eyes of that King, whoſe character was compoſed of humility and charity; or will Chriſt admit thoſe tempers into the court of heaven, which David determined to exclude from his court upon earth?

6. *Mine eyes* ſhall be *upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he ſhall ſerve me.*

The "eyes" of princes cannot be better employed, than in looking around them, in order to chuſe, from among their own ſubjects, fit and able men to tranſact the public buſineſs; men of inviolable "fidelity," and unſhaken integrity; men who know how to think aright, and how to ſpeak what they think; men likewiſe who "walk in the perfect way" of holineſs, who do not diſgrace their politics by their lives, or prejudice their maſter's cauſe by their ſins, more than they can ever advance it by their abilities. Biſhops may be called the "eyes" of Chriſt; they are to "over-"look" his people, and we pray him at the ſeaſons of ordination, "ſo to guide and govern their minds, "that they may faithfully and wiſely make choice "of fit perſons to ſerve in the ſacred miniſtry of "the Church."

7. *He*

7. *He that worketh deceit ſhall not dwell within my houſe: he that telleth lies ſhall not tarry in my ſight.*

To purge a court of "deceit" and "falſehood," was a reſolution worthy king David, worthy the repreſentative of him, who ſtyleth himſelf THE TRUTH, from whoſe heavenly palace and city will be for ever excluded, as St. John informeth us, "whoſoever "loveth and maketh a LIE." Rev. xxii. 15.

8. *I will early deſtroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the* LORD.

Every earthly prince ſhould conſider himſelf as raiſed to a throne, and inveſted with power, "for "the puniſhment of wickedneſs and vice, and the "maintenance of God's true religion and virtue." "Early," therefore, in the "morning" of his reign, he ſhould ſet about the work of reformation, that ſo the bleſſings of heaven may deſcend upon himſelf and his people, according to the infallible promiſes of the moſt High. And let each individual, in like manner, and for the ſame reaſon, be zealous and diligent to reform his own heart and ways, ever mindful of that future moſt awful morning, when the King of Righteouſneſs ſhall "cut off," with the ſword of eternal judgment, "all wicked doers from "that city of Jehovah," the new and heavenly Jeruſalem.

XX DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CII.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm is intitled, "A prayer of the "afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and "poureth out his complaint before the "Lord." It ſeems to have been written, during the captivity, by one of the prophets, who, like Daniel in parallel circumſtances, 1, 2. maketh ſupplication before his God; 3—11. ſetteth forth, in the moſt affecting ſtrains, his wretched and ſorrowful eſtate, or rather, perhaps, that of Jeruſalem, which he perſonates; 12. he comforteth himſelf, by reflecting on the eternity and immutability of Jehovah; 13—24. he predicteth and deſcribeth the reſtoration of Sion, with her enlargement by the acceſſion of the Gentiles, when Meſſiah ſhall have viſited and redeemed her; 23, 24. he returneth again to his lamentations; but 25—28. again repoſeth his confidence on him who created all things, and who would not fail to make good his word and promiſe, if not to the generation then preſent, yet to their poſterity.

This

This is the fifth of thoſe ſtyled Penitential Pſalms; and St. Paul, Heb. i. 10. hath aſſerted, that it is addreſſed to the eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the world.

1. *Hear my prayer,* O LORD, *and let my cry come unto thee.* 2. *Hide not thy face from me, in the day* when *I am in trouble, incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call, anſwer me ſpeedily.*

Sin and ſorrow force "prayers" and "cries" from the ſons of Adam. The firſt petition here preferred is, that theſe prayers and cries may be "heard" in heaven. The day of human life is "a day of trou-"ble," a day of darkneſs and gloomineſs, which nothing can brighten, but the light of God's "coun-"tenance;" nothing can render comfortable, but a "ſpeedy anſwer" of mercy and peace from above.

3. *For my days are conſumed away like,* or, *in ſmoke, and my bones are burnt as an hearth,* or, *a fire brand.*

The effects of extreme grief on the human frame are compared to thoſe which fire produceth upon fuel. It exhauſts the radical moiſture, and, by ſo doing, ſoon conſumes the ſubſtance. A man's time and his ſtrength evaporate in melancholy, and his "bones," thoſe pillars and ſupports of his body, become like wood, on which the fire hath done it's work, and left it without ſap, and without coheſion. A ſingle penitent, or a whole church, bewailing their reſpective tranſgreſſions, when under the rod of God, may uſe theſe words, and will underſtand the force of them.

4. *My*

4. My heart is ſmitten and withered like graſs: ſo that I forget to eat my bread.

The metaphor is continued, and the "heart" itſelf, out of which flow the ſtreams of life, is repreſented as ſuffering that from grief, which the "graſs" of the field ſuffers from the burning heat of the ſun: it is "ſmitten, and withered." And when grief hath thus dejected the ſpirits, the man has no appetite for that food which is to recruit and elevate them. Ahab, ſmitten with one kind of grief, David with another, and Daniel with a third, all "forgot," or refuſed, "to eat their bread." 1 Kings xxi. 4. 2 Sam. xii. 16. Dan. x. 3. Such natural companions are "mourning and faſting."

5. By reaſon of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my ſkin.

Extremity of ſorrow cauſeth the fleſh to waſte, and the bones to preſs upon the ſkin, through which they are ready to force their way. Sickneſs is the chaſtiſement of heaven, inflicted often upon us, to ſupply the want of that diſcipline, which we ſhould exerciſe upon ourſelves. "For if we would judge "ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged. But when "we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that "we ſhould not be condemned with the world." 1 Cor. xi. 31.

6. I am like the pelican of the wilderneſs: I am like an owl, or, *bittern of the deſert,* or, *of waſte ruinous places. 7. I watch, and am as a ſparrow alone upon the houſe-top.*

The ſorrowful man is naturally deſirous of retiring from the world, to vent his complaints in ſolitude, and

and to paſs the nights in watchfulneſs and prayer. In ſuch a ſituation the true penitent placeth himſelf, worthily to bewail his ſins, and deprecate the judgments of his God. And in ſuch a ſituation did captivity place the daughter of Zion, that ſhe might do likewiſe. The uſe which Daniel made of it for this purpoſe, may be ſeen in his ixth chapter.

8. *Mine enemies reproach me all the day: and they that are mad againſt me, are ſworn againſt me.*

The ſcoffs and reproaches of men are generally added to the chaſtiſements of God; or rather, perhaps, are a part, and ſometimes the bittereſt part of them. How the enemies of Jeruſalem behaved, in the day of her calamity, is well known. How carnal and ungodly men behave to a penitent, when mourning for his ſins, under the afflicting hand of heaven, is as well known.

9. *For*, or, *Therefore I have eaten aſhes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping*, 10. *Becauſe of thine indignation and wrath; for thou haſt lifted me up, and caſt me down.*

By "eating aſhes, and drinking tears," we may underſtand the ſame as if it had been ſaid, "I have "eaten the bread of humiliation, and drank the wa- "ter of affliction;" aſhes being the emblem of one, and tears the conſequence of the other; while the actions of "eating and drinking" intimate to us the fulneſs and ſatiety which the ſufferer had experienced of both, from "the wrath and indignation of God." Proſperity and adverſity are from him; "he lifteth "up, and he caſteth down;" he lifted up Jeruſalem

above all the earth, and he caſt her down, to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

11. *My days are like a ſhadow that declineth: and I am withered like graſs.* 12. *But thou, O* LORD, *ſhalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations.*

A "ſhadow" never continueth in one ſtay, but is ſtill gliding imperceptibly on, lengthening as it goes, and at laſt vaniſheth into darkneſs. The period of it's exiſtence is limited to a day at fartheſt. The riſing ſun gives it birth, and in that moment when the ſun ſets it is no more. The "graſs" of the field, in like manner, hath a being of the ſame duration. In the morning, clothed with verdure and beauty, it refreſheth and delighteth the eye of the beholder; but the evening findeth it cut down, dried up, and withered. Such is the life of man, ſojourning in the land of his captivity, and doing penance for his ſins. But the eternity of Jehovah, the infallibility of his promiſes, and the remembrance of his former works and mercies, comfort our hearts, and encourage us to hope, nay even to rejoice, in the midſt of ſorrow and tribulation.

13. *Thou ſhalt ariſe*, and *have mercy upon Sion; for the time to favour her, yea the ſet time is come.* 14. *For thy ſervants take pleaſure in her ſtones, and favour the duſt thereof.*

From this paſſage, and what follows, it appears, that the ſuppliant, in this Pſalm, bewails not only his own miſeries, but thoſe of the church. Iſrael was in captivity, and Sion a deſolation. A "time," notwithſtanding, a "ſet time" there was at hand, when God had promiſed to "ariſe, and to have

"mercy

"mercy upon her." The bowels of her children yearned over her ruins; they longed to see her rebuilt, and were ready, whenever the word of command should be given, to set heart and hand to the blessed work. Such ought to be our affection towards our Sion, however afflicted and destitute she may, at any time, appear to be; such should be our faith in the promises of God concerning the future glorification of his church, at the time appointed.

15. *So the heathen shall fear the name of the* LORD: *and all the kings of the earth thy glory.* 16. *When the* LORD *shall build up Sion, he shall appear in his glory.* 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.*

The object to which the prophets of old had chiefly respect, was not only the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the material temple, but the salvation of sinners, and the erection of the Christian church, in the days of Messiah's kingdom. "When the Lord" Jesus thus "built up "Sion, he appeared in his glory: the heathen feared "his name, and all the kings of the earth" adored his majesty, because he had "regarded the prayer of "the destitute" sons of Adam, in their worse than Babylonish captivity, and had arisen himself to be their Saviour and mighty Deliverer. We, in these latter days, look and pray for the second appearance of the same Redeemer, with power and great glory, to raise the dead, and to build up from the dust a Jerusalem which shall experience no more vicissitudes, but continue for ever in unchangeable beauty and brightness.

18. *This ſhall be written for the generation to come; and the people which ſhall be created ſhall praiſe the* LORD.

The hiſtory of "this" redemption and reſtoration by Meſſiah, thus foretold, hath been "written" in the goſpel for the benefit of "after generations," to the end that "the people, who are created" anew in Chriſt Jeſus, may from age to age praiſe Jehovah, in Pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs; as it is done at this day in the church, and ever will continue to be done, till the choirs of heaven and earth ſhall be united before the throne of the Lamb.

19. *For he hath looked down from the height of his ſanctuary: from heaven did the* LORD *behold the earth;* 20. *To hear the groaning of the priſoner, to looſe thoſe that are appointed to death;* 21. *To declare the name of the* LORD *in Sion, and his praiſe in Jeruſalem:* 22. *When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to ſerve the* LORD.

Redemption is the ſubject of praiſe in the Chriſtian church; and the proceſs of that great work is here deſcribed by images borrowed from the temporal deliverance and reſtoration of Iſrael. God is repreſented as looking with an eye of pity from heaven upon poor mankind; as hearing the groans of ſinners, faſt bound in the chains of their ſins, and ſentenced to death eternal; as coming down to forgive and to releaſe them; that, being ſo forgiven and releaſed, they might cauſe the church to reſound with his praiſes, when, upon the preaching of the goſpel, it ſhould be filled with converts, aſſembled from every people

people and kingdom of the world. Look down, O Lord Jesu, yet once again upon thy servants, still under the dominion of death, and the bondage of corruption; loose these chains, even these also, O Lord, and bring us forth into the glorious liberty of thy children; that with the whole assembly of the redeemed, in the heavenly Jerusalem, we may bless and praise thy name for ever and ever.

23. *He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.*

The prophet, in the person of captive Sion, having, from verse 13. to verse 22. expressed his faith and hope in the promised redemption, now returns to his mournful complaints, as at verse 11. Israel doubteth not of God's veracity, but feareth lest his heavy hand should crush the generation then in being, before they should behold the expiration of their troubles. They were in "the way," but their "strength" was so "weakened," and their "days shortened," that they almost despaired of holding out to their journey's end. A sore trial hath the Christian church to undergo in the last days, before the second advent of her Lord and Saviour. Strong faith and invincible patience will be necessary, to enable her to endure, until the end shall come.

24. *And I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations.*

Israel prayeth that the holy seed might not be extirpated, and perish by a kind of untimely death, e'er yet the promise had been made good, and Sion had seen the salvation of her God. Every man hath reason to pray, that God would not "take him away

"in the midſt of his days," or call upon him when unprepared; but that time may be allowed him, to perfect his repentance, and to work out his ſalvation.

25. *Of old haſt thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.* 26. *They ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure: yea, all of them ſhall wax old like a garment, as a veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed:* 27. *But thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall have no end.*

Amidſt the changes and chantes of this mortal life, one topic of conſolation will ever remain, namely, the eternity and immutability of God our Saviour; of him who was, and is, and is to come. Kingdoms and empires may riſe and fall; nay, the heavens and the earth, as they were originally produced and formed by the WORD of God, the Son, or ſecond perſon in the Trinity, to whom the Pſalmiſt here addreſſeth himſelf; See Heb. i. 10. ſo will they, at the day appointed, be folded up, and laid aſide, as an old and worn out garment; or, if the ſubſtance remain, the preſent form and faſhion of them will periſh, and they will be utterly changed and altered from the ſtate in which they now are. But Jehovah is ever the ſame; his years have no end, nor can his promiſe fail, any more than himſelf. "Heaven and earth," ſaith he "ſhall paſs away; but my words ſhall not "paſs away." Matt. xxiv. 35.

28. *The children of thy ſervants ſhall continue; and their ſeed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee.*

Whatever be the fate of the preſent generation, whether they may live to ſee the accompliſhment of all that has been foretold, or not, yet the word of God

God ſtandeth ſure; there ſhall be always a church, and an holy ſeed, to whom the promiſes ſhall be made good. They have already been fulfilled with regard to the advent of Meſſiah, and the vocation of the Gentiles. The events which are behind, will be brought forward and come to paſs in their ſeaſons, until the counſel of God ſhall be finiſhed, and every prediction receive it's full accompliſhment, in the glorification of the redeemed.

PSALM CIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this evangelical and moſt comfortable hymn, David, after 1, 2. exciting himſelf to the work, 3—5. praiſeth Jehovah for the mercies of redemption; 6, 7. celebrateth his goodneſs to Moſes and Iſrael; 8—13. ſetteth forth the divine philanthropy, under various beautiful expreſſions and images; 14—16. deſcribeth, in a manner wonderfully affecting, man's frail and periſhable ſtate; but 17, 18. leadeth him, for conſolation, to the everlaſting mercy of God in Chriſt, the ſtability of whoſe throne and kingdom 19. he declareth, and 20—22. calleth upon heaven and earth to join with him in bleſſing and praiſing his holy name.

1. *Bleſs the* LORD, *O my ſoul, and all that is within me* bleſs *his holy name.*

The Pſalmiſt, about to utter a ſong of praiſe, firſt endeavours to awaken and ſtir up his "ſoul" to the joyful taſk. He calleth forth all his powers and faculties, "all that is within him," that every part of his frame may glorify it's Saviour; that the underſtanding may know him, the will chuſe him, the affections delight in him, the heart believe in him, and the tongue confeſs him. "Bleſs the Lord, O "my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy "name."

2. *Bleſs the* LORD, *O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.*

Thankſgiving cannot be ſincere and hearty, unleſs a man bear impreſſed upon his mind, at the time, a quick ſenſe of "benefits" received; and "benefits" we are moſt of us apt to "forget;" thoſe, eſpecially, which are conferred upon us by God. Therefore David repeateth his ſelf-awakening call, and ſummoneth all his powers of recollection, that none of the divine favours might continue unnoticed and unacknowledged. A catalogue of ſuch particular mercies, temporal and ſpiritual, as each individual hath experienced through life, might be of ſervice, to refreſh the memory, upon this important head.

3. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thine infirmities.*

At the head of God's mercies muſt for ever ſtand "remiſſion of ſin," or that full and free pardon purchaſed for us by Jeſus Chriſt, whereby, if we truly repent and believe in him, our tranſgreſſions, though

though ever ſo many, and ever ſo great, are done away, and become as if they had never been; from a ſtate of guilt we paſs into one of juſtification, from a ſtate of enmity into one of reconciliation, from a ſtate of ſervitude into one of liberty and ſonſhip. Next to the pardon of ſin, conſidered as a crime, we are to commemorate the cure of it, conſidered as a diſeaſe, or indeed as a complication of diſeaſes—"Who healeth all thine infirmities." The body experienceth the melancholy conſequences of Adam's offence, and is ſubject to many "infirmities;" but the ſoul is ſubject to as many. What is pride, but lunacy; what is anger, but a fever; what is avarice, but a dropſy; what is luſt, but a leproſy; what is ſloth, but a dead palſy? Perhaps there are ſpiritual maladies ſimilar to all corporeal ones. When Jeſus Chriſt was upon earth, he proved himſelf the phyſician of men's ſouls, by the cures which he wrought upon their bodies. It is he alone who "forgiveth all "our iniquities;" it is he alone who "healeth all "our infirmities." And the perſon who findeth his ſin "cured," hath a well grounded aſſurance that it is "forgiven."

4. *Who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction; who crowneth*, or, *encircleth thee with loving kindneſs, and tender mercies.*

Man hath two "lives;" he is therefore ſubject to a double "deſtruction;" and, conſequently, capable of a twofold "redemption. He who is recovered from ſickneſs, and thereby redeemed from that deſtruction which natural death bringeth upon the body, will undoubtedly ſing this ſtrain in tranſports of

of gratitude; and he ought ſo to do. But what will be the ſenſations of him, who celebrates, in the ſame words, the ſpiritual redemption of his ſoul from death and deſtruction everlaſting? How is he "crowned" with the "loving kindneſs" of Jehovah; how is he "incircled" by the arms of "mercy! "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her "left hand riches and honour;" never ending "length of days;" true "riches," that abide for ever; and "the honour which cometh from God "only."

5. *Who ſatisfieth thy mouth with good* things: ſo that *thy youth is renewed like the eagles.*

It is God who giveth us the "good things" of this world, and who giveth us likewiſe an appetite and a taſte to enjoy them. It is God who reſtoreth a body, emaciated by ſickneſs, to bloom, vigour, and agility. And he doeth greater things than theſe. He "ſatisfieth" all the deſires of the ſoul with a banquet of ſpiritual dainties, and beſtoweth on her a reliſh for the ſame. By the renovating power of his Spirit he reſtoreth her from decrepitude to the health and ſtrength of a young* "eagle," ſo that ſhe can aſcend

* Of all birds it is known, that they have yearly their moulting times, when they ſhed their old, and are afreſh furniſhed with a new ſtock of feathers. This is moſt obſervable of hawks and vultures, and eſpecially of "eagles," which, when they are near an hundred years old, caſt their feathers, and become bald, and like young ones, and then new feathers ſprout forth. Thus St. Ambroſe, "Aquila longam ætatem ducit, dum "vetuſtis plumis fatiſcentibus, nova pennarum ſucceſſione juve-"neſcit." Dr. HAMMOND.

up

up on high, and contemplate the ſplendor of the Sun of Righteouſneſs. Thus, at the day of the reſurrection, clothed anew with ſalvation and glory, the body likewiſe ſhall ariſe from earth, and fly away as an eagle toward heaven, to begin an immortal life, and be for ever young.

6. *The* LORD *executeth righteouſneſs and judgment for all* that are *oppreſſed.* 7. *He made known his ways unto Moſes, his acts unto the children of Iſrael.*

From a conſideration of his own particular caſe, the Pſalmiſt maketh a general reflection on that attribute of God, which inclineth him to deliver his people, and to puniſh their oppreſſors, of what kind ſoever they be. And here, that grand diſplay of the "ways" and "works" of Jehovah, the redemption of "Iſrael" by the hand of "Moſes," immediately occurs, and is celebrated. Thus each private mercy, whether of a temporal or ſpiritual nature, ſhould remind us of that public and univerſal bleſſing of Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, from which every other bleſſing floweth, as a ſtream from it's fountain, and for which God ought, therefore, upon all occaſions, to be praiſed and glorified.

8. *The* LORD *is merciful and gracious, ſlow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

When Moſes deſired Jehovah to ſhew him his "way," and his "glory," Exod. xxxii. 13. 18. Jehovah paſſed by, and proclaimed himſelf, as here, "Jehovah merciful, and gracious," &c. Exod. xxxiii. 6. How full of conſolation to the penitent ſoul are all the words of this verſe! "The LORD is "merciful," רחום, the bowels of his tender compaſſion

paſſion yearn over us, as thoſe of a mother yearn over the child of her womb; "yea a woman may "forget her ſucking child, yet can he not forget us." Iſai. xlix. 15. He is "gracious," חנון, ready to give us freely all things that are needful for our ſalvation. He is "ſlow to anger," bearing with the frowardneſs of his children, with their provocations and relapſes, for 40, 50, 60, 70 years together, before he ſtrikes the blow; giving them, by this his long ſuffering, time for repentance. And he is "plente-"ous in mercy," רבחסד, "great, mighty in mercy," placing his chief glory in this attribute, and hereby teaching us how to eſtimate true greatneſs.

9. *He will not always chide: neither will he keep* his anger *for ever.* 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our ſins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

God's chaſtiſements are ſome of the moſt eminent proofs of his mercy. They are ſent to reclaim us, and to ſave us from eternal puniſhment. They continue not always, but are removed when they have done their work; and while they laſt, are as nothing, in compariſon of thoſe heavy ſtripes which our ſins have deſerved.

11. *For as the heaven is high above the earth, ſo great is his mercy towards them that fear him.* 12. *As far as the eaſt is from the weſt, ſo far hath he removed our tranſgreſſions from us.* 13. *Like as a father pitieth* his *children, ſo the* LORD *pitieth them that fear him.*

We are here preſented with three of the moſt beautiful, appoſite, and comforting ſimilitudes in the world. When we lift up our eyes, and behold around

around us the lofty and ſtupendous vault of heaven, incircling, protecting, enlightening, refreſhing, and cheriſhing the earth, and all things that are therein, we are bidden to contemplate in this glaſs, the immeaſurable height, the boundleſs extent, and the ſalutary influences of that mercy, which, as it were, embraceth the creation, and is over all the works of God. Often as we view the ſun ariſing in the eaſt, and darkneſs flying away from before his face towards the oppoſite quarter of the heavens, we may ſee an image of that goodneſs of Jehovah, whereby we are placed in the regions of illumination, and our ſins are removed and put far away out of his ſight. And that our hearts may, at all times, have confidence towards God, he is repreſented as bearing towards us the fond and tender affection of a "father," ever ready to defend, to nouriſh, and to provide for us, to bear with us, to forgive us, and to receive us in the parental arms of everlaſting love.

14. *For he knoweth our frame: he remembereth that we are duſt.* 15. As for *man, his days are as graſs: as a flower of the field, ſo he flouriſheth.* 16. *For the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.*

The conſideration of man's frail and periſhable eſtate weighs with the Almighty, and prevails upon him to ſpare his creature. And doth not the tear of compaſſion ſtart in the eye of him, who reads the deſcription which David hath given of it in theſe verſes? "Man," fallen, mortal man—"his days "are as graſs;" like that, he cometh out of the earth, and continueth but a ſhort time upon it;

"as

"as a flower of the field," fair but tranſient, "ſo "he" unfoldeth his beauty in youth, and "flouriſh-"eth" awhile in the vigour of manhood; but lo, in a moment, the breath of heaven's diſpleaſure, as a blighting "wind, paſſeth over him, and he is gone;" he boweth his drooping head, and mingleth again with his native duſt; his friends and his companions look for him at the accuſtomed ſpot, which he once adorned—but in vain—the earth has opened her mouth to receive him, and "his place ſhall know "him no more."

17. *But the mercy of the* LORD *is from everlaſting to everlaſting upon them that fear him: and his righteouſneſs unto childrens children:* 18. *To ſuch as keep his covenant, and to thoſe that remember his commandments to do them.*

Let not man preſume, who withereth like the green herb; but then, let not man deſpair, whoſe nature, with all it's infirmities, the Son of God hath taken upon him. The flower which faded in Adam, blooms anew in Chriſt, never to fade again. "The "mercy of Jehovah," in his Meſſiah, "is everlaſt-"ing;" and of that everlaſting mercy poor frail man is the object. It extendeth to all the generations of the faithful ſervants of God. Death ſhall not deprive them of it's benefits, nor ſhall the grave hide them from the efficacious influence of it's all-enlivening beams, which ſhall pierce even into thoſe regions of deſolation, and awaken the ſleepers of ſix thouſand years. Man muſt pay to juſtice the temporal penalty of his ſins; but mercy ſhall raiſe him again, to receive the eternal reward, purchaſed by his

his Saviour's righteouſneſs. A paſſage in the firſt epiſtle of St. Peter doth moſt admirably illuſtrate this part of our Pſalm. "We are born again, not of "corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the "WORD of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. "For all fleſh is graſs, and all the glory of man as "the flower of graſs. The graſs withereth, and the "flower thereof falleth away; but the WORD of the "Lord endureth for ever. And this is the WORD "which by the Goſpel is preached unto you." 1 Pet. i. 23, &c.

19. *The* LORD *hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

The glorious perſon who worketh all theſe wonders of mercy for his people, the WORD of God, and Saviour of the world, is triumphantly ſeated upon his "throne in heaven," and is poſſeſſed of all power to accompliſh his will, even until all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him. The glories of his throne, the brightneſs of his excellent majeſty, and the might of his irreſiſtible power, are deſcribed at large by St. John, Rev. iv. v. xix.

20. *Bleſs the* LORD, *ye his angels, that excel in ſtrength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.* 21. *Bleſs ye the* LORD, *all ye his hoſts, ye miniſters of his, that do his pleaſure.* 22. *Bleſs the* LORD, *all his works, in all places of his dominion: bleſs the* LORD, *O my ſoul.*

Joy is obſerved to be of a diffuſive and communicative nature. The heart of the Pſalmiſt is full, and overfloweth with it. Unable worthily to praiſe Jehovah for his mercies vouchſafed to the church, he

inviteth

inviteth heaven and earth to join with him, and to celebrate, in full chorus, the redemption of man. St. John ſaw the throne of Meſſiah prepared; he beheld the univerſal band aſſembled; and he heard when "all the angels round about the throne, ten "thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of "thouſands, with every creature in heaven, earth, "and ſea," lifted up their voices, and ſang together, "Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power be "unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto "the Lamb, for ever and ever."

XX DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CIV.

ARGUMENT.

This is an euchariſtic hymn, full of majeſty and ſweetneſs, addreſſed to Jehovah, as Creator of the world. It ſetteth forth his glory, wiſdom, goodneſs, and power, diſplayed 1—9. in the formation of the heavens and earth; 10—18. in the various proviſion made for beaſts, and birds, and for man, the lord of all; 19—24. in the revolutions of the celeſtial bodies, and the conſequent interchanges of day and night, of labour and reſt; 25, 26. in the ſea, and every thing, that moveth in, or upon the waters.

waters. 27—30. The dependence of the whole creation upon God, for it's being and well being, is beautifully repreſented, with 31, 32. the glory which the Creator receiveth from his works, the pleaſure which he taketh in them, and the power which he hath over them. 33. The Pſalmiſt declareth his reſolution ever to praiſe Jehovah, and 34. predicteth the deſtruction of thoſe who refuſe, or neglect ſo to do. As there is a ſimilitude between the natural and the ſpiritual creation, alluſions of that ſort are frequently made, in the enſuing comment, which may, perhaps, point out the reaſon why the church hath appointed this Pſalm to be uſed on Whitſunday.

1. *Bleſs the* LORD, *O my ſoul: O* LORD *my God, thou art very great, thou art cloathed with honour and majeſty*; Heb. *with glory and beauty*. 2. *Who covereſt* thyſelf *with light as* with *a garment*; *who ſtretcheſt out the heavens like a curtain*; i. e. of *a tent*, or, *pavilion*.

The Scriptures inform us, that the ſame perſon, who redeemed the world, did alſo create it. In the ciid Pſalm, as we are aſſured by St. Paul, "to the Son "it is ſaid, Thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid "the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are "the works of thy hands." To him, therefore, as Creator, is the civth Pſalm likewiſe addreſſed. He is deſcribed as inveſted with "the glory which he

"had with the Father, before the world was;" a glimpſe of which he vouchſafed to the three diſciples, who were preſent at his transfiguration, when "his "face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was "white as the light." The firſt inſtance of his creating power is afforded us by the "heavens," which form a magnificent "canopy, or pavilion," comprehending within it the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof. It is enlightened by the celeſtial orbs ſuſpended in it, as the holy tabernacle was, by the lamps of the golden candleſtick. And it was originally framed, erected, and furniſhed by it's Maker, with more eaſe than man can conſtruct and pitch a "tent," for his own temporary abode. Yet muſt this noble pavilion alſo be taken down; theſe reſplendent and beautiful heavens muſt paſs away, and come to an end. How glorious then ſhall be thoſe "new heavens," which are to ſucceed them, and to endure for ever!

3. *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*

The divine architect is here repreſented as "laying "the beams of his chambers, as compacting his lofts, "or ſtories, in the waters." Some think the formation of the terreſtrial ſtrata in the waters, which at the beginning covered all things, is here alluded to. If it be objected, that the Pſalmiſt, in the courſe of his deſcription, is not yet arrived at the formation of the earth, but is ſtill in the upper regions of the air; may we not ſuppoſe, that the ſubject is, in this particular, a little anticipated, which is no uncommon

caſe

caſe in the ſacred writings? The generality of expoſitors, however, interpret the paſſage of thoſe "dark waters, compacted into thick clouds of the "ſkies," which the Almighty is elſewhere ſaid to make the "ſecret place, or chamber" of his reſidence, and a kind of "footſtool" to his throne. Pſ. xviii. 9, 11. And thus, indeed, the former part of our verſe is plainly and immediately connected with what follows; "who maketh the clouds his "chariots, and walketh upon the wings of the "wind." How aſtoniſhingly magnificent and tremendous is the idea which theſe words convey to us of the great King, riding upon the heavens, encompaſſed with clouds and darkneſs, attended by the lightnings, thoſe ready executioners of his vengeance, and cauſing the world to reſound and tremble at the thunder of his power, and the noiſe of his chariot wheels. By theſe enſigns of royalty, theſe emblems of omnipotence, and inſtruments of his diſpleaſure, doth Jehovah manifeſt his preſence, when he viſiteth rebellious man, to make him own and adore his neglected and inſulted Lord. See and compare Pſ. xviii. 10. and the context.

4. *Who maketh his angels ſpirits: his miniſters a flaming fire.*

From the manner in which theſe words are introduced, and the place where they ſtand, one ſhould conceive the meaning of them to be, that God employeth the elements of air and fire, the winds רוחות and the lightnings, as his meſſengers מלאכין and miniſters, to execute his commands upon the

earth*. But the Apoſtle, Heb. i. 7. informeth us, that they have a further reference to immaterial angels; either becauſe thoſe angels often appeared in the likeneſs, or becauſe they were endued with the properties of "wind and flame." Intellectual beings of the higheſt order in the realms above, are as ready to fulfil the word of Jehovah, as are the elements of this lower world. Both teach a leſſon of obedience to the ſons of men; to thoſe of them more eſpecially, who are appointed "angels" of the churches, and "miniſters" of Chriſt.

5. Who *laid the foundations of the earth*, that it *ſhould not be removed for ever*.

In the original it is, "Who hath founded the "earth upon it's baſes." The formation of this globe, on which we tread, is a wonderful inſtance of divine wiſdom and power, whether we conſider the manner in which the parts of it are put and kept together, or it's ſuſpenſion in the circumambient fluid, which, as ſome philoſophers ſuppoſe, by preſſing upon it on every ſide, forms ſo many columns, as it were, to ſupport, and keep it balanced. The words, "that it ſhould not be removed for ever," do by no means imply, that the earth is ſtationary, or that it is eternal; but only thus much, that it is ſo conſtructed, as to anſwer the end, and to laſt the time, for which it was created and intended. It ſhall continue the ſame in itſelf, and with relation to other bodies, neither altering it's ſhape, nor changing it's

* In the French tranſlation it is—"Who maketh the winds "his angels, the flaming fire his miniſters."

courſe,

"Il fait des vents ſes anges & un feu brulant ſes Serviteurs" — From the French Tranſlation — in the common Prayer Book — "Qui rendez vos anges auſſi prompts que les vents

courſe, till the day appointed for it's diſſolution; after which, as there are to be "new heavens," ſo will there alſo be "a new earth."

6. *Thou coveredſt it with the deep, as* with *a garment: the waters ſtood above the mountains.* 7. *At thy rebuke they fled: at the voice of thy thunder they haſted away.* 8. *They go,* or, *went up by the mountains: they go,* or, *went down by the vallies, unto the place which thou hadſt founded for them.* 9. *Thou haſt ſet a bound that they may not paſs over: that they turn not again to cover the earth.*

Moſt interpreters ſuppoſe this to be a deſcription of the ſituation of things, and of what was effected by the power of God, on the third day of the creation, when he ſaid, "Let the waters be gathered to-"gether into one place, and let the dry land appear; "and it was ſo." Indeed, the proceſs at the creation was ſo exactly ſimilar to that at the deluge, with regard to the circumſtances here mentioned, that it matters not to which we apply the beautiful and truly poetical paſſage before us. In both caſes, the earth was covered with the waters, as with a garment, in every part; in both caſes, they fled at the Almighty word, like the ſcattered remains of a routed army; from the heights of mountains, whither they had aſcended, they ſunk down into the vallies; from the vallies they retired to the bed of the ocean, and a part of them deſcended from thence into the great deep, that lieth beneath. Bounds were ſet them, beyond which they ſhould never paſs, to overwhelm us any more for ever. And the experience of 4000 years hath taught us, that where the Creator hath

laid his commands, plain ſand is a ſufficient barrier. Thus the church hath been delivered from her ſpiritual enemies; and ſhe hath a promiſe, on which ſhe may with full confidence rely, that "the gates of "hell ſhall never prevail againſt her."

10. *He ſendeth the ſprings into the valleys, which run among the hills.* 11. *They give drink to every beaſt of the field; the wild aſſes quench their thirſt.*

The waters of the ſea are not only prevented from deſtroying the earth, but by a wonderful machinery are rendered the means of preſerving every living thing which moveth thereon. Partly aſcending from the great deep through the ſtrata of the earth, partly exhaled in vapour from the ſurface of the ocean into the air, and from thence falling in rain, eſpecially on the tops and by the ſides of mountains, they break forth in freſh ſprings, having left their ſalts behind them; they trickle through the valleys, between the hills, receiving new ſupplies as they go; they become large rivers, and after watering, by their innumerable turnings and windings, immenſe tracts of country, they return to the place from whence they came. Thus every animal hath an opportunity of quenching that thirſt, which muſt otherwiſe ſoon put a period to it's exiſtence. The "wild aſſes" are particularly mentioned, becauſe they live in remote and ſandy deſerts; yet even ſuch creatures, in ſuch places, are by the God of nature taught the way to the waters; inſomuch that the parched traveller, when in ſearch of a fountain, findeth them to be the beſt guides in the world, and needeth only to obſerve and follow the herds of them deſcending to the

ſtreams.

ſtreams. In the ſpiritual ſyſtem, or new creation, there are wells of ſalvation, living ſprings, waters of comfort, of which all nations, even the moſt ſavage and barbarous, are invited to come and drink freely. They flow among the churches; they deſcend into the hearts of the lowly; and they refreſh us in our paſſage through the wilderneſs: for even there "do "waters break out, and ſtreams in the deſert." Iſai. xxxv. 6.

12. *By them ſhall the fowls of the air have their habitation*, which *ſing among the branches.*

"By them," that is, by "ſprings of water," in the "vallies," the birds delight to have their habitations, and to ſing amidſt the verdant branches, which conceal them from our ſight. "The muſic "of birds," as one hath well obſerved, "was the "firſt ſong of thankſgiving which was offered on "earth before man was formed. All their ſounds "are different, but all harmonious, and all together "compoſe a choir which we cannot imitate*." If theſe little choriſters of the air, when refreſhed by the ſtreams, near which they dwell, expreſs their gratitude by chanting, in their way, the praiſes of their Maker and Preſerver, how ought Chriſtians to bluſh, who, beſides the comforts and conveniences of this world, are indulged with copious draughts of the water of eternal life, if, for ſo great bleſſings, they pay not their tribute of thankſgiving, and ſing not unto the Lord the ſongs of Sion! "He that "at midnight, when the very labourer ſleeps ſe-

* Weſley's Survey of the Wiſdom of God in the Creation, I. 149.

"surely, ſhould hear, as I have often done, the "clear airs, the ſweet deſcants, the natural riſing "and falling, the doubling and redoubling of the "nightingale's voice, might well be lifted above "earth, and ſay, Lord, what muſic haſt thou pro-"vided for the ſaints in heaven, when thou affordeſt "bad men ſuch muſic upon earth!" Walton's Complete Angler, P. 9.

13. *He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is ſatisfied with the fruit of thy works.* 14. *He cauſeth the graſs to grow for the cattle, and herb for the ſervice of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;* 15. *And wine* that *maketh glad the heart of man,* and *oil to make* his *face to ſhine, and bread* which *ſtrengtheneth man's heart.*

The fertility of the earth is owing to God, who for that purpoſe, "watereth" it מעליותיו "from his "chambers," whether the word hath a reference to the clouds above, or the depths below, for both are concerned in the operation. Hence all the glory and beauty of the vegetable world; hence the graſs, which nouriſheth the cattle, that they may nouriſh the human race; hence the green herb, for food and for medicine; hence fields covered with corn, for the ſupport of life; hence vines and olive trees laden with fruits, whoſe juices exhilarate the heart, and brighten the countenance. Nor let us forget the ſpiritual benedictions correſponding to theſe external ones; the fruitfulneſs of the church through grace, the bread of everlaſting life, the cup of ſalvation, and the oil of gladneſs.

16. *The trees of the* LORD *are full* of ſap: *the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted.*

The

The whole earth is a garden, planted by the hand, and watered by the care of Jehovah. But in a more eſpecial manner is his glory ſet forth by the lofty and magnificent cedars, which, growing wild on the mountain and in the foreſt, owe nothing to the ſkill and induſtry of man. The moiſture of the earth, rarefied by the heat of the ſun, enters their roots, aſcends in their tubes, and by due degrees expands and increaſes them, till they arrive at their growth. God hath alſo another garden, in which there are other trees of his planting, called by Iſaiah, ch. lxi. 3. "Trees of righteouſneſs." Theſe are his faithful ſervants, who, through the Spirit which is given unto them, become eminent and ſteady in goodneſs; their examples are fragrant, and their charity diffuſive.

17. *Where the birds make their neſts: as for the ſtork, the fir trees are her houſe.*

Moſt admirable is that wiſdom and underſtanding, which the Creator hath imparted to the birds of the air, whereby they diſtinguiſh times and ſeaſons, chuſe the propereſt places, conſtruct their neſts with an art and exactneſs unattainable by man, and ſecure and provide for their young.—"Is it for the birds, O "Lord, who have no knowledge thereof, that thou "haſt joined together ſo many miracles? Is it for "the men who give no attention to them? Is it for "thoſe who admire them, without thinking of thee? "Rather is it not thy deſign, by all theſe wonders, "to call us to thyſelf? To make us ſenſible of "thy wiſdom, and fill us with confidence in thy "bounty, who watcheſt ſo carefully over theſe in-

"conſiderable

"considerable creatures, two of which are sold for a "farthing?"*

18. *The high hills* are *a refuge for the wild goats*, and *the rocks for the conies.*

The same force of what we call Instinct prevails in terrestrial animals, and directs them to places of refuge, where they may be safe from their enemies. Thus the wild goats climb with ease to the tops and crags of mountains, where they depositit their young. And thus animals of another kind, which are more defenceless than the goats, and not able to climb like them, have yet a way of intrenching themselves in a situation perfectly impregnable, among the rocks;† we find them, on that account, numbered by Solomon among the "four" kinds of animals, which, though "little upon the earth, are exceeding wise. "The שפנים are but a feeble folk, yet make they "their houses in the rocks." Prov. xxx. 26. They who in themselves are "feeble" and helpless, should look out betimes for a mountain of refuge, and a rock of safety.

19. *He appointeth the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.*

From a survey of the works of God upon earth, the Psalmist proceedeth to extol that divine wisdom, which is manifested in the motions and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and in the grateful vicissitude

* Wesley, as above.

† It is uncertain what species of animals is here intended by the word שפנים. But it is enough for our purpose, that they are creatures remarkable for securing themselves in the manner here mentioned.

of

of day and night, occaſioned thereby. A beautiful paſſage in the book of Eccleſiaſticus will, perhaps, be the beſt comment on the former part of this verſe. "He made the moon to ſerve in her ſeaſon, for a "declaration of times, and a ſign of the world. "From the moon is the ſign of feaſts, a light that "decreaſeth in her perfection. The month is called "after her name, increaſing wonderfully in her "changing, being an inſtrument of the armies "above, ſhining in the firmament of heaven; the "beauty of heaven, the glory of the ſtars, an ornament "giving light in the higheſt places of the Lord." Ch. xlii. 6. The latter part of the verſe expreſſeth the obedience of the "ſun," or "ſolar light," to the law of it's Creator; it ſeemeth to "know" the exact time of it's coming on, and going off, and fulfilleth the courſe preſcribed to it, without the leaſt deviation. O that we, who are endowed with ſenſe and reaſon, could in like manner fulfil our courſe; and that God's will were "done on earth, as it is "even in" this lower and material "heaven!"

20. *Thou makeſt darkneſs, and it is night; wherein all the beaſts of the foreſt do creep* forth. 21. *The young lions roar after their prey, and ſeek their meat from God.*

Night and darkneſs invite the wild beaſts of the foreſt and deſert from their dens and receſſes, to "ſeek" the "prey" allotted them by the providence of that God, who feedeth the young lions, as well as the young ravens, when hunger enforceth them, as it were, to call upon him. Thus, when a nation hath filled up the meaſure of it's iniquities, the Sun

of

of Righteouſneſs knoweth the time of his departure from it; the light of the Goſpel is darkened, and an horrible night ſucceeds: the executioners of vengeance are in motion, and a commiſſion from above is given them to ſeize upon the prey.

22. *The ſun ariſeth, they gather themſelves together, and lay them down in their dens.* 23. *Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour, until the evening.*

At the return of day, the ſons of ravage retire, and ſculk away to their ſeveral hiding places, that man, the lord of the creation, may ariſe, and perform, unmoleſted, the taſk which his Maker hath appointed him. When the light of truth and righteouſneſs ſhineth, error and iniquity fly away before it, and the "roaring lion" himſelf departeth for a time. Then the Chriſtian goeth forth to the work of his ſalvation, and to his labour of love, until the evening of old age warns him to prepare for his laſt repoſe, in faith of a joyful reſurrection.

24. O LORD, *how manifold are thy works! In wiſdom haſt thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.*

Tranſported with a ſurvey of the wonders which preſent themſelves in heaven above, and on earth below, the Pſalmiſt breaks forth into an exclamation (and what heart hath not already anticipated him) on the variety and magnificence, the harmony and proportion of the works of God, in this outward, and viſible, and periſhable world. What then, are the miracles of grace and glory? What are thoſe inviſible and eternal things, which God hath prepared for them that love him, in another and a better

world,

world, and of which the things viſible and temporary are no more than ſhadows? Admitted to that place, where we ſhall at once be indulged with a view of all the divine diſpenſations, and of that beatitude in which they terminate, ſhall we not, with angels and archangels, cry out, "O LORD, how manifold "are thy works! In wiſdom haſt thou made them "all; heaven and earth are full of thy riches, and "of thy glory!"

25. So is *this great and wide ſea, wherein* are *things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great beaſts*, or, *living creatures*. 26. *There go the ſhips*; there is *that leviathan*, whom *thou haſt made to play therein*.

There is not in all nature a more auguſt and ſtriking object than the ocean. It's inhabitants are as numerous as thoſe upon the land, nor is the wiſdom and the power of the Creator leſs diſplayed, perhaps, in their formation and preſervation, from the ſmalleſt fiſh that ſwims, to the enormous tyrant of the deep, the leviathan himſelf. By means of navigation, Providence hath opened a communication between the moſt diſtant parts of the globe; the largeſt ſolid bodies are wafted, with incredible ſwiftneſs, upon one fluid, by the impulſe of another, and ſeas join the countries which they appear to divide. In the ocean we behold an emblem of the world; under a ſmooth deceitful ſurface it conceals dangerous rocks, and devouring monſters; it's waves are ever reſtleſs, and oftentimes it is all over ſtorm and tempeſt, threatning to overwhelm the helpleſs deſpairing mariner, in a moment; ſuch is the voyage we all have to make, ere we can reach the deſired haven, and attain that happy

happy clime, where, as we are told, there is "no "more SEA." Rev. xxi. 1.

27. *Theſe wait all upon thee: that thou mayeſt give* them *their meat in due ſeaſon.* 28. *That thou giveſt them, they gather: thou openeſt thine hand, they are filled with good.*

In various ways hath God provided food for the ſupport of all living creatures, and directed them to ſeek, and to find it. How pleaſing a ſpeculation is it, to conſider the whole family of air, earth, and ſea, as "waiting upon" the Father and Lord of all things, expecting when he ſhould "open his hand," and diſtribute to each member his "portion of meat "in due ſeaſon!" The caſe is the ſame with regard to beings intellectual and ſpiritual, of which is compoſed the church and family of Chriſt, in heaven and earth; theſe wait all upon HIM, by whom Jehovah hath opened the hand of mercy, and abundantly ſupplied all our needs, through the riches of his grace.

29. *Thou hideſt thy face, they are troubled: thou takeſt away their breath, they die, and return to their duſt.* 30. *Thou ſendeſt forth thy ſpirit, they are created: and thou reneweſt the face of the earth.*

When God, in the ſeaſon of winter, ſeemeth to hide his face, and to have withdrawn his beneficent influences, we hear the cries of the creation in diſtreſs; if he recall the breath of life from any creature, to which he had communicated it, that creature preſently ceaſeth to be what it was; ſenſe and motion are at an end; the form and figure of it periſh; and it is reſolved into it's original duſt. But

again

again he exerteth his quickening power, and lo, freſh generations of animals are produced; freſh crops of vegetables ſhoot forth to nouriſh them; and there is a renovation of univerſal nature. The preſence of God, in like manner, is the life, his abſence is the death of the ſoul. If he withdraw his grace, we periſh everlaſtingly; but when he "ſendeth forth "his Spirit," as he did on the day of Pentecoſt, "old things paſs away, and all things become new;" the winter is over, and ſpring ſucceeds in it's place. Nay, the hour is coming, when through the ſame Spirit, he ſhall alſo quicken our mortal bodies, and thus, in a more evident and wonderful manner, "re-"new the face of the earth."

31. *The glory of the* LORD *ſhall endure for ever: the* LORD *ſhall rejoice in his works.* 32. *He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they ſmoke.*

Such being the works of God, ſo manifold and ſo marvellous, the prophet foretelleth, that his "glory," diſplayed and declared by the ſame, ſhould "endure for ever;" that creatures would never be wanting, to give him the praiſe and honour due unto him; inſomuch that, graciouſly accepting this their tribute, and pleaſed to find a proper return made him, Jehovah ſhould, as at the firſt creation, acquieſce and rejoice in all his works and diſpenſations. In the mean time, let the unruly and diſobedient reflect upon the greatneſs of his power, and the terrors of his vengeance, who with a look can ſhake the earth, and with a touch can fire the mountains, as when he once deſcended on Sinai.

33. *I will ſing unto the* LORD *as long as I live: I will ſing praiſe unto my God, while I have my being.* 34. *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet: I will be glad in the* LORD.

And who, O divine Pſalmiſt, will not "ſing" with thee, that hath an underſtanding to apprehend, and a tongue to celebrate the works of his Maker and Redeemer! To whom will not thy heavenly meditations be ſweet as honey, fragrant as the breath of ſpring, pleaſant and cheering as the fruit of the vine? Who doth not long to partake of thy ſpiritual joy, and holy gladneſs?

35. *Let the ſinners*, or, *the ſinners ſhall be conſumed out of the earth, and let the wicked*, or, *the wicked ſhall be no more: bleſs thou the* LORD, *O my ſoul. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

The "ſinners," and the "wicked," are they, of whom it is elſewhere ſaid, that they "conſider not "the works of Jehovah, nor regard the operations "of his hands," to give him praiſe and glory for them. Theſe ſhall one day experience the power of that God, whoſe wiſdom and goodneſs they would never acknowledge. They ſhall be "conſumed," and "periſh from the preſence of the Lord, and from "the glory of his power, when he ariſeth to ſhake "terribly the earth." The Pſalmiſt, therefore, endeth as he began; "Bleſs THOU the LORD, O "my ſoul;" adding, by way of exhortation to us, and to all the world, "Praiſe ye the LORD." Let us, then, with "the four and twenty elders, fall "down before him that ſitteth upon the throne, and "worſhip

"worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, ſaying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and "honour, and power; for thou haſt created all "things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were "created." Rev. iv. 10, 11.

XXI DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CV.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm, the firſt part of it, at leaſt, to ver. 15. we know, from 1 Chron. xvi. to have been compoſed by David, and given out on occaſion of his placing the ark of God in Sion. It containeth 1—8. an exhortation to praiſe Jehovah for his works of mercy and power, wrought in favour of Iſrael. 9—44. Theſe are traced from their ſource, namely, the covenant made with Abraham, through the Patriarchal hiſtory, to the deliverance of the nation from the Egyptians, and it's ſettlement in Canaan; the end of all which 45. is declared to have been, that God might have a people to ſerve him. The ſame is true of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, which was the grand ſubject of the promiſe made to Abraham, and

of which the temporal mercies, vouchſafed to the Patriarchs and their poſterity, were ſo many pledges and figures.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.*

God, who formerly reſided in mount Sion, vouchſafing his preſence in a tabernacle made with hands, hath ſince bleſſed the church with his appearance in the fleſh; and we Chriſtians are bound to "make "known his deeds," and the mercies which he hath wrought for us, "among the people;" that ſo, all the world may know him, and love him, and partake of his ſalvation.

2. *Sing unto him, ſing Pſalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*

Muſic and converſation are two things, by which the mind of man receiveth much good, or a great deal of harm. They who make "Jehovah" and his "wondrous works" the ſubjects of both, enjoy a heaven upon earth. And they who do in reality love their Saviour, will always find themſelves inclined to "ſing to him," and to "talk of him."

3. *Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that ſeek the* LORD.

In whom ſhould the redeemed "glory," exult, and triumph, but in their Redeemer, who hath made himſelf one with them, that they may be one with him? They who "ſeek" the Lord Jeſus by prayer, ſhould do it with a chearful and joyous heart, becauſe better it is to "ſeek" him, than to "find" all things

things elſe; and the ſoul that is brought to ſeek him, will ſoon exchange the galling cares and tormenting deſires of the world, for the light yoke and eaſy burden of her Saviour, in whom ſhe will find reſt, and peace, and comfort. Therefore,

4. *Seek the* LORD *and his ſtrength: ſeek his face evermore.*

By faith we find our Redeemer in this life, and experience the power and comfort of his grace; but hope and love ſtill ſeek, and wiſh, and aſpire after the ſight and enjoyment of him in heaven, whither he is aſcended.

5. *Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgment of his mouth*; 6. *O ye ſeed of Abraham his ſervant, ye children of Jacob his choſen.*

As an encouragement to "ſeek Jehovah evermore, "the ſeed of Abraham and the children of Jacob" are exhorted to bear in mind the marvellous works "which he had done" for them from the beginning, to protect and to deliver them, as alſo "the judg-"ments of his mouth," whether by this phraſe we underſtand the righteous laws given to his people, or the denunciations and executions of vengeance againſt their enemies. But alas, "the ſeed of Abraham" kept not the faith of their great progenitor; "the "children of Jacob," have forfeited the bleſſing which their father obtained. We Gentiles have been, for a long ſeaſon, the adopted "ſeed of Abraham," and have inherited the benediction of "Jocob." Let us not forget the "marvellous works" of God in Chriſt, and the "judgments of his mouth."

7. *He is the* LORD *our God, his judgments* are *in all the earth.*

If Jehovah were the "God" of Iſrael, on account of what, in covenant, he promiſed and performed for them, he is now the God of us all, on account of what he promiſed, and hath performed, in Chriſt Jeſus, for them, and for us? If, when he ſettled Iſrael in Canaan, "his judgments" were manifeſted to "all the earth," were they not manifeſted alſo, when the Chriſtian church was eſtabliſhed, and the idolatrous powers of the world were overthrown by the Goſpel?

8. *He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word* which *he commanded to a thouſand generations.* 9. *Which* covenant *he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Iſaac:* 10. *And confirmed the ſame unto Jacob for a law,* and *to Iſrael for an everlaſting covenant:* 11. *Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*

Upon bringing the ark to mount Sion, David teacheth Iſrael to bleſs and praiſe God for his having "remembered his covenant," made with an "oath" to their forefathers, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, that he would, in due time, ſettle his people in the land of Canaan. Now, it is very obſervable, that in the hymn uttered by Zacharias, the father of St. John the Baptiſt, on the ſubject of our redemption by Chriſt, thanks are given to the Lord God of Iſrael, becauſe he had "remembered his holy covenant, and "performed the oath which he ſware to our fore-"father Abraham." And what was that? Why, "that we being delivered out of the hand of our "enemies,

"enemies, ſhould ſerve him without fear, in holineſs "and righteouſneſs." But when, or where did God promiſe any ſuch thing to Abraham, except when he told him, "that his ſeed ſhould be in bondage four "hundred years," but that "the nation," which detained them in bondage, ſhould afterwards be "judged," and that they ſhould be "brought out," and come to "Canaan," Gen. xv. 13. where they were to "ſerve" him. The caſe ſeems to be this. Zacharias, under the immediate influence and direction of the Holy Spirit, transfers the language of the old diſpenſation to the affairs of the new one; he celebrates the redemption of the world, by Chriſt, from ſin and death, in words which literally deſcribe the redemption of Iſrael from Egypt by Moſes; to teach us, that we ſhould regard one as a ſacramental pledge and figure of the other; that there is another bondage, in which the people of God are held; another Moſes, who is to deliver them; another land of promiſe and of reſt, where they are to be ſettled. This the Hebrews might have known, as St. Paul tells them, Heb. iv. from a paſſage in the xcvth Pſalm, where, long after they had been in poſſeſſion of Canaan, David ſpeaks of another "day" of probation, and another "Reſt." The Jews have ſince had a melancholy proof of the ſame thing, by being diſpoſſeſſed of that earthly inheritance, which they falſely deemed to have been perpetual, and vainly regarded as the end of all the promiſes, made to a "thouſand generations," that is, (a definite number being put for an indefinite) to them, and to us,

and to "as many as the Lord our God ſhall call," while the world ſhall laſt.

12. *When they were but a few men in number: yea, very few, and ſtrangers in it.* 13. *When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people.*

How wonderful was the diſplay of God's wiſdom and power, in his chuſing a ſingle family, and that a ſmall one, the members of which were literally "ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth;" in his promiſing to that family, in thoſe circumſtances, a large and fertile country, where the thrones of many princes were then firmly eſtabliſhed; and laſtly, in his putting them into actual poſſeſſion of it, at the time appointed! Thus the family of the holy Jeſus was, at firſt, but ſmall; "the members of it were a "few, yea, a very few;" they were ſojourners in a land not theirs; "they went from one nation to an-"other;" nay they were accounted the "refuſe of "the world, and the offſcouring of all things." But, "Fear not, little flock," ſaith he unto them, "for it "is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the "kingdom." Luke xii. 32. Let us view Iſrael brought into Canaan, nor doubt but that believers ſhall inherit the kingdom of heaven, and ſucceed to the thrones of apoſtate angels.

14. *He ſuffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their ſakes:* 15. Saying, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*

The patriarchs, during their peregrinations, were often in imminent danger; as Abraham on account of Sarah; Gen. xx. Iſaac, in a ſimilar caſe; Gen. xxvi.

xxvi. Jacob from Laban; Gen. xxxi. And from his brother Eſau; Gen. xxxiii. Yet, deſtitute as they were of earthly help, the mightieſt kings could not hurt them. Their "ways pleaſed the Lord, and "he made even their enemies to be at peace with "them." Prov. xvi. 7. They were the typical "prophets, and Meſſiahs, or *Chriſts," of Jehovah; and kings were forbidden to lift up a hand againſt them. How doth the ſame kind providence watch over the body and the members of the true CHRIST! how often hath it interpoſed, to protect and preſerve them from the powers of the world!

16. *Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole ſtaff of bread.*

When Jacob had eſcaped other perils, we find him and his family likely to periſh with hunger. Gen. xlii. "Famine" is here finely repreſented as a ſervant, ready to come and go, at the "call" and command of God; for calamities, whether public or private, are the meſſengers of divine juſtice. "Bread" is the "ſtaff" which ſupports life; when that ſtaff is "broken," the body fails, and ſinks to the earth.

* Ideo autem Chriſti ſive Uncti dicuntur, quod eſſent et ſacerdotes et reges: ſummâ quippe poteſtate præditi, nullique obnoxii. Hinc fœdera æquo jure pacta cum regibus: hinc bella ſuſcepta et quidem nutu ſuo, auſpiciis, ut aiunt, ſuis. Gen. xiv. 21. Hinc Hethæi ad Abrahamum: "Audi nos, Domine: Princeps Dei es "apud nos." Ibid. xxiii. 6. nemini obnoxius, niſi Deo. Quo jure Iſaacus et Jacobus uſi ſunt. Gen. xxvi, &c. Ad hæc Prophetæ erant; ut hic, et Gen. xx. 7. Quos omnes titulos unum Chriſti nomen complectitur. Chriſti autem dicuntur, in typo Chriſti ipſius ab eis orituri. BOSSUET.

The Word of God is the ſtaff of ſpiritual life, the food and ſupport of the ſoul; and the ſoreſt of heaven's judgments is that mentioned by the prophet Amos; Ch. viii. 11. "Behold, the days come, ſaith "the Lord God, that I will ſend a famine in the "land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirſt of water, "but of hearing the words of the LORD." Such a famine was ſore in all lands, when Chriſt made his appearance in the fleſh, whoſe advent, with the bleſſed effects of it, is wonderfully ſhadowed forth in the prophetical hiſtory of the patriarch Joſeph.

17. *He ſent a man before them*, even *Joſeph*, who *was ſold for a ſervant:* 18. *Whoſe feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron:*

Joſeph and Jeſus were both envied, hated, and ſold by their brethren; both ſuffered by a falſe accuſation; the former was laid in irons, the latter crucified, and confined in the priſon of the grave, faſt bound with the bands of death. The wickedneſs of man, in working it's own will, did unwittingly accompliſh the counſels of God. "As for you," ſaith Joſeph to his brethren, Gen. l. 20. "Ye thought "evil againſt me; but God meant it unto good, to "bring to paſs, as it is this day, to ſave much peo"ple alive." And how doth St. Peter addreſs the brethren of that other Joſeph? "Him, being deli"vered by the determinate counſel and foreknow"ledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked "hands have crucified and ſlain — And now bre"thren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it — "But thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by "the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould "ſuffer,

"ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled." Acts ii. 23. and iii. 17.

19. *Until the time that his word came: the word of the* LORD *tried him.*

Joſeph continued in priſon, "until the time that "his word, or cauſe, דבר came" before the king, and was "known," according to our old tranſlation; or, "until his word," or prediction concerning the chief butler's promotion, "came to paſs;" for this was the means of Joſeph's enlargement and juſtification; ſince a perſon, guilty of the crime with which he ſtood charged, would not have been inſpired to foretel future events. "Can we find," ſaid Pharaoh, "ſuch an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit "of God is?" Gen. xli. 38. In the mean time, the "word, commandment, or decree, אמרת of the "LORD" tried him, in the furnace of affliction, there refining and preparing him for his approaching exaltation to glory and honour. Thus was there a time appointed for the abode of Jeſus in the grave, at the expiration of which, all his promiſes and predictions were fulfilled: he came forth, "made per-"fect through ſufferings," and ready to "enter into "his glory."

20. *The king ſent and looſed him: even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.* 21. *He made him lord of his houſe, and ruler of all his ſubſtance:* 22. *To bind his princes at his pleaſure: and teach his ſenators wiſdom.*

The circumſtances of Joſeph's advancement, here alluded to, are related, Gen. xli, &c. Thoſe of our Lord's reſurrection and glorification afford a marvellous parallel. At the determined hour, "The

"king"

"king" of heaven "ſent" his angel, "and looſed "him" from the bands of death; "the ruler of the "world let him go free" from the penalty which he had undertaken to pay, and had now fully paid. "He made him lord of his houſe, the church, and "ruler of all his ſubſtance" in heaven and in earth, that he might, by his holy diſcipline, "bind princes "at his pleaſure," and by his Goſpel "teach" true "wiſdom" to the "ſenators" and politicians of the world; he was cloathed with the robes of majeſty, he was adorned with all the enſigns of royalty, and to him it was ordained that "every knee ſhould "bow." The ſtorehouſes of grace and ſalvation were opened; the nations came to be ſupplied by him with the bread of life; and we look for that happy day, when the Jews ſhall do the ſame, and "Joſeph ſhall be made known to his brethren."

23. *Iſrael alſo came into Egypt: and Jacob ſojourned in the land of Ham.* 24. *And he increaſed his people greatly; and made them ſtronger than their enemies.* 25. *He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal ſubtilly with his ſervants.*

The Pſalmiſt now exhibiteth to our view a freſh ſcene of tribulation and affliction, which occaſioned repeated mercies, and a new deliverance. Iſrael, by means of Joſeph, obtained an eſtabliſhment in Egypt. But in proceſs of time, the increaſe and proſperity of Iſrael excited the envy and jealouſy of Egypt, and brought on a perſecution. The kindneſs and love of God to his people "turned the hearts" of the Egyptians againſt them, and cauſed animoſity to take place of friendſhip. A king aroſe who knew not Joſeph, and meaſures were concerted to keep

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the Hebrews under; a royal edict was iſſued to prevent their increaſe, by putting the males to death; and the generation then in being was reduced to a ſtate of the moſt abject ſervitude, and cruel bondage. Such uſage the people of God have often experienced from the world, at the inſtigation of him, who in Scripture is ſtyled, "the prince of this "world."

26. *He ſent Moſes his ſervant*, and *Aaron whom he had choſen.* 27. *They ſhewed his ſigns among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.*

When the tyranny and oppreſſion of Pharaoh were at the higheſt, and Iſrael cried unto Jehovah becauſe of the bondage, he remembered his promiſe to Abraham, and ſent Moſes, with Aaron, to effect that mighty deliverance, which was to be the grand pledge and figure of our ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt. Of him Moſes propheſied, when he ſaid, "A pro-"phet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you "of your brethren, LIKE UNTO ME." Deut. xviii. 15. cited and applied Acts iii. 22. He came to reſcue mankind from a ſpiritual bondage, and to deliver all who were "oppreſſed by the devil:" Acts x. 38. he came at a time when that oppreſſion was moſt grievous among Jews and Gentiles: his birth was ſignalized by an order from another Pharaoh, to ſlay the infants; and Egypt afforded him a refuge from the tyrant's fury: he wrought innumerable "ſigns and wonders;" but they were all ſigns of mercy, and wonders of love. Thoſe of terror and vengeance were reſerved for a future advent, foreſhewed in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

28. *He*

28. *He ſent darkneſs, and made it dark: and they rebelled not againſt his word:* or, *and did they not ſtill rebel againſt his word?* 29. *He turned their waters into blood, and ſlew their fiſh.* 30. *Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.* 31. *He ſpake, and there came divers ſorts of flies,* Heb. *a mixture came, and lice in all their coaſts.* 32. *He gave them hail for rain:* and *flaming fire in their land.* 33. *He ſmote their vines alſo, and fig trees; and brake the trees of their coaſts.* 34. *He ſpake, and the locuſts came, and caterpillars, and that without number;* 35. *And did eat up all the herbs in their land: and devoured the fruit of their ground.* 36. *He ſmote alſo all the firſt born in their land: the chief of all their ſtrength.*

Who can behold this army of divine judgments thus paſſing in dreadful array before him, without trembling very exceedingly at that power, which is able to ſend them, ſingly, or in conjunction, upon a ſinful land? Who can reflect upon their number and variety, without adoring that goodneſs, patience, and long ſuffering, which tried ſo many different methods, and waited ſo long, to lead the offenders to repentance? For more particulars, ſee the comment on Pſ. lxxviii. 43—51.

37. *He brought them,* i. e. the people of Iſrael, *forth alſo with ſilver and gold: and* there was *not one feeble* perſon *among their tribes.* 38. *Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.*

The Iſraelites not only came forth from Egypt, but came forth laden with the ſpoils of their enemies, which they were commanded to take, by him who

who is the abſolute lord of all property, and who, as a righteous judge, did thus award to his people the wages due to their incredible labours, the Egyptians being now willing and ready to furniſh them with any thing required, in order to diſmiſs them. "The Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that "they might ſend them out of the land in haſte: for "they ſaid, we be all dead men." Exod. xii. 33. And what was very extraordinary, among ſuch a number of men, women, children, and cattle, nothing was "weak and feeble," nothing unable to perform the journey. The order was, that "not a "hoof ſhould be left behind;" Exod. x. 26. and he who commanded, gave ſtrength to obey. Thou haſt alſo enjoined us thy ſervants, O Lord, to quit Egypt, and march for Canaan; let thy grace invigorate us, from time to time, that ſo we faint not by the way.

39. *He ſpread a cloud for a covering: and fire to give light in the night.* 40. The people *aſked, and he brought quails: and ſatisfied them with the bread of heaven.* 41. *He opened the rock, and the waters guſhed out: they ran in the dry places like a river.*

"Brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ig-"norant, how that all our fathers were under the "cloud; and were all baptized unto Moſes in the "cloud; and did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat; "and did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink; for "they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed "them; and that ROCK was CHRIST." 1 Cor. x. 1—4. In our paſſage through this wilderneſs of life, over barren ſands, and amidſt fiery ſerpents, be thou,

thou, bleſſed Lord, our guide and our guard; protected by thy providence, ſupported by thy word, and refreſhed by thy ſpirit, lead us even where, and in what manner it ſhall ſeem good to thee; only do not thou forſake us, and we aſk no more.

42. *For he remembered his holy promiſe, and Abraham his ſervant.* 43. *And he brought forth his people with joy, and his choſen with gladneſs.*

The ſame God hath ſince "remembered again his "promiſe to Abraham;" he hath viſited his people, and redeemed them from the bondage of ſin, under the tyranny of Satan; which redemption they daily celebrate in the church, with "joy and gladneſs," waiting for their final deliverance from death and the grave, when they are to ſing in heaven "the "ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb." Rev. xv. 3.

44. *And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people:* 45. *That they might obſerve his ſtatutes, and keep his laws. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

It was not, therefore, intended, that the Iſraelites ſhould regard Canaan as their paradiſe, and look no farther; but that, being reſcued from their enemies, and ſettled in peace and plenty, they ſhould improve the opportunity, thereby afforded them, of ſerving the Lord their God, and of ſecuring to themſelves, through the obedience of faith, an inheritance in "a better country, that is to ſay, an "heavenly." And let all the children of faithful Abraham, whoſe lot hath fallen in "a land flowing "with milk and honey," upon earth, reflect, that God hath given them riches, and the leiſure which

riches

riches procure, not for the purpoſe of indulging and corrupting themſelves and others, but that they may glorify him, benefit their neighbours, and ſave their own ſouls; "that they may obſerve his ſtatutes, "and keep his laws." Iſrael was delivered by Moſes, and the church redeemed by Chriſt, that God might "purify to himſelf a peculiar people, "zealous of good works." Tit. ii. 14.

XXI DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CVI.

ARGUMENT.

The Pſalmiſt here again commemorates the divine benefits, upbraiding withal the ingratitude of thoſe who received them. 1, 2. He exhorteth men to the praiſe of Jehovah; 3—5. proclaimeth the bleſſedneſs, and longeth for the felicity of the ſaints; 6. confeſſeth the ſins of Iſrael, and giveth a detail of their rebellions; 7—12. at the red ſea; 13—15. when they luſted for fleſh in the wilderneſs; 16—18. in the matter of Korah; 19—23. in that of the golden calf; 24—27. at the report of the ſpies; 28—31. in the affair of Baal Peor; 32, 33. at the waters Meribah; 34—39. in not deſtroying idolatry, but being

ſeduced

ſeduced by it. 40—46. God's frequent judgments, and as frequent mercies, are related; 47. a prayer is made, that Jehovah would gather Iſrael from among the heathen, which ſhews the Pſalm to have been written during ſome captivity, or diſperſion. The laſt verſe contains an act of bleſſing and praiſe.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for* he is *good, for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

In the perſon of a penitent nation, the prophet invites mankind to "give thanks unto Jehovah," for that "goodneſs" which preventeth us with bleſſings, and for that "mercy" which forgiveth our tranſgreſſions; that mercy which was ſhewn to our forefathers, upon their repentance, and will "ever" be ſhewn, upon the ſame condition, to us and our poſterity; that mercy, which will bring ſin and miſery to an end, itſelf continuing eternal and unchangeable.

2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the* LORD? Who *can ſhew forth all his praiſe?*

But who is ſufficient for a work, which demandeth the tongues and harps of angels? "When you "glorify the Lord," ſaith the ſon of Sirach, "exalt "him as much as you can; for even yet will he far "exceed: and when you exalt him, put forth all "your ſtrength, and be not weary; for you can "never go far enough." Eccluſ. xliii. 30.

3. *Bleſſed are they that keep judgment:* and *he that doeth righteouſneſs at all times.*

Next

Next to angels, they are "bleſſed," and qualified to praiſe God with the voice, who glorify him in their lives; who having experienced in themſelves the "mighty acts" of mercy, pardoning the guilt, and breaking the power of ſin, are become the ſervants of Jeſus, and render to their Saviour "at all "times," in adverſity no leſs than in proſperity, the due tribute of unfeigned love and obedience.

4. *Remember me, O* LORD, *with the favour* which thou beareſt unto *thy people: O viſit me with thy ſalvation.* 5. *That I may ſee the good of thy choſen, that I may rejoice in the gladneſs of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance.*

The Pſalmiſt offereth a prayer for himſelf, or rather for the church of Iſrael, that ſhe, with himſelf, might partake of ſuch bleſſedneſs. The words might have a reference to a temporal reſtoration and felicity; but they certainly extend much farther, and form the moſt ſpiritual and heavenly petition, that the devouteſt Chriſtian can prefer to the throne of grace. "Remember me, O Lord, with the "favour" which thou haſt always ſhown to "thy "people," in whom thou haſt delighted from the foundation of the world, and on whom it is thy good pleaſure to confer a glorious kingdom. "O "viſit me with thy ſalvation," with which ſo many patriarchs, prophets, and kings, have deſired to be viſited, the ſalvation of thy Chriſt, the juſtifier of all them that believe, and the rewarder of his ſaints: "that I may ſee the good of thy choſen," their felicity in beholding thy countenance, and living for ever in thy preſence; "that I may rejoice in the

"gladneſs of thy nation," the unſpeakable gladneſs of thoſe who enter into the joy of their Lord; "and "glory with thine inheritance," ſinging hallelujahs before thine everlaſting throne, in the Jeruſalem which is above. The Iſraelitiſh church, when in peace and tranquility ſerving her God, and chanting the ſongs of Sion, afforded a very lively repreſentation of this eternal felicity.

6. *We have ſinned with our fathers: we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.*

They who have joined with the prophet, in his affectionate aſpiration after the divine favour, may here learn the ſureſt way to attain it; namely, by confeſſing their own ſins, and thoſe of their anceſtors. "We have ſinned with our fathers," that is, after their example of unbelief and diſobedience, of which an account immediately followeth. The fathers' ſins are often reflected in their children, and each new reflection, inſtead of being weaker, is ſtronger than the foregoing; as in the caſe of the Jews.

7. *Our fathers underſtood not thy wonders in Egypt, they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked* him *at the ſea,* even *at the red ſea.*

The Iſraelites did not profit, as they ſhould have done, by the miracles wrought for them in Egypt; they increaſed not in the wiſdom and knowledge of God their Saviour; but when they ſaw themſelves purſued by Pharaoh, their faith failed, they murmured againſt Moſes, and wiſhed themſelves again in the bondage from which they were juſt delivered. Exod. xiv. 10, &c. Thus, when the penitent find-

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eth himſelf beſet with difficulties and dangers; when he ſeeth before him that death unto ſin, through which he muſt paſs to a life of righteouſneſs, while the devil and the world follow hard after him, to deſtroy or bring him back to a more cruel bondage; how apt is he to forget all that Chriſt hath done for him! Fear puts out the light of faith, and hides the proſpect of the promiſed land; imagination recalls the former gratifications of ſenſe; he is tempted to regret the deſertion of Egypt, and to wiſh for a return to it again.

8. *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake; that he might make his mighty power to be known.* 9. *He rebuked the red ſea alſo, and it was dried up: ſo he led them through the depths, as through the wilderneſs.* 10. *And he ſaved them from the hand of him that hated* them: *and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.* 11. *And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.* 12. *Then believed they his words; they ſang his praiſe.*

Comforted and encouraged by Moſes, the armies of Iſrael advanced to the ſhore; and lo, the waves, at the lifting up of the powerful Rod, inſtantly parted, and, like ſo many well diſciplined troops, arranging themſelves in two columns, diſcloſed a new and ſtrange path, by which the people of God were conducted, in perfect ſecurity, to the oppoſite ſhore; when the waters, falling down, and reaſſuming their antient habitation, overwhelmed the infidel hoſt, and left not a man to carry the news to Egypt. Through all the difficulties and dangers of the Chriſtian courſe, faith will ever find a way opened, by the

power of Jeſus, from ſin to righteouſneſs, and from death to life: the enemies of our ſalvation, how formidable ſoever, ſhall diſappear, and be no more; and we ſhall ſing, like Iſrael, a ſong of triumph to the Lord our God.

13. *They ſoon forgat his works*; Heb. *They made haſte, they forgat his works, they waited not for his counſel.* 14. *But luſted exceedingly in the wilderneſs, and tempted God in the deſert.* 15. *And he gave them their requeſt, but ſent leanneſs into their ſouls.*

Soon after the Iſraelites had experienced the power and goodneſs of Jehovah at the red ſea, we find them murmuring againſt him, Exod. xv. 22. They grew impatient, they looked upon themſelves as forgotten, and given over to deſtruction. They loathed manna, and required fleſh; fleſh was ſent them, on which they ſurfeited themſelves; the wrath of God ſmote them, and many were carried off by a grievous plague. Numb. xi. 4, 33. Let us learn to wait God's time and counſel, for the ſupply of neceſſaries, much more of conveniences; remembering that he hath given us his Son, and therefore will not deny us ſuch inferior corporeal bleſſings, as he foreſeeth will really prove bleſſings to us. Let us be duly thankful for that "bread which cometh down from "heaven," cautious how we requeſt the good things of this world, and ſtrictly temperate in the uſe of them, when given.

16. *They envied Moſes alſo in the camp, and Aaron the ſaint of the* LORD. 17. *The earth opened, and ſwallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.*

ram. 18. *And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burnt up the wicked.*

Moſes and Aaron were the divinely appointed governors of Iſrael, in church and ſtate. Envy and ambition led Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, to accuſe the former of tyranny, and the latter of prieſtcraft. Jehovah was appealed to, a day appointed, and a deciſion made. One body of the malecontents went down alive into the pit, another was conſumed by fire from heaven. Numb. xvi. Let ſchiſmatics and rebels beware of that "pit," which is bottomleſs, and of that "fire," which ſhall never be quenched.

19. *They made a calf in Horeb, and worſhipped the molten image.* 20. *Thus they changed their glory into the ſimilitude of an ox that eateth graſs.* 21. *They forgat God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt:* 22. *Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the red ſea.*

While the terrible preſence of God abode upon mount Sinai, and Moſes was gone up thither to receive the law, even then, and there, "at Horeb," the people apoſtatiſed to the old favourite ſin of idolatry, and perſuaded Aaron to make them a "calf, or ox," before which they proſtrated themſelves, acknowledging it, or the power repreſented by it, whatever that was, to have been the author of their deliverance from Egypt; Exod. xxxii. for "as to Moſes, they knew not what was become of "him," nor ever expected to ſee him any more. Thus they exchanged their "glory," the glory which had accompanied them in the myſtic cloud,

nay, which was then preſent before their eyes on the top of the mount, for "an image made like to a "four-footed beaſt," as it is ſaid of the heathen in their worſt eſtate; Rom. i. 23. and thus they forgat Jehovah, who had wrought his works and wonders for them in Egypt, and at the red ſea. It is to be hoped, we ſhall never live to ſee a time, when the miracles of OUR Redemption ſhall be forgotten; when the return of Jeſus Chriſt from heaven ſhall be deſpaired of; and when the people ſhall ſolicit their teachers to fabricate a new philoſophical deity, for them to worſhip, inſtead of the God of their anceſtors, to whom glory hath been aſcribed, from generation to generation.

23. *Therefore he ſaid that he would deſtroy them, had not Moſes his choſen ſtood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, leſt he ſhould deſtroy them.*

When we hear Jehovah ſaying to Moſes, on account of his people's monſtrous ingratitude, and atrocious wickedneſs, "Let me alone, that my "wrath may wax hot againſt them, and that I may "conſume them, and I will make of thee a great "nation;" when we hear Moſes, notwithſtanding this, interceding for his countrymen, with the offended majeſty of heaven; urging to God the glory of his name, the relation in which he ſtood to Iſrael, the covenant he had made with their fathers; and if they muſt be caſt off, deſiring himſelf to periſh with them; "if thou wilt, forgive their ſin; and if not, "blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou "haſt written;" how are we aſtoniſhed at an inſtance of ſuch invincible fortitude, fervent piety, un-

unadulterated patriotiſm, triumphant faith, and unbounded charity! Once, and but once, was this inſtance exceeded, by Him, in whoſe name the interceſſion of Moſes was made and accepted; who, really taking upon himſelf the ſins of his people, ſuffered the vengeance due to them; and who is now at the right hand of God, interceding for us all. See Exod. xxxii. 10—14, and 32.

24. *Yea, they deſpiſed the pleaſant land: they believed not his word:* 25. *But murmured in their tents,* and *hearkened not unto the voice of the* LORD. 26. *Therefore he lifted up his hand againſt them, to overthrow them in the wilderneſs* 27. *To overthrow their ſeed alſo among the nations, and to ſcatter them in the lands.*

The hiſtory here alluded to is contained in Numb. xiii. and xiv. The ſpies brought back a favourable account of the promiſed land, and it's productions, but communicated to the people thoſe terrible apprehenſions, with which themſelves were poſſeſſed, concerning the power of the Anakims, and other inhabitants of Canaan. Infidelity preſently diſcovered itſelf, by it's uſual fruit, diſobedience. They thought they ſhould never be able to ſurmount all theſe difficulties, but ſhould become a prey, with their wives and children, to the ſword; and a return to Egypt was once more the cry of the camp of Iſrael. Therefore did Jehovah "lift up his hand "againſt them; he declared, that none of the generation then in being, Joſhua and Caleb only excepted, ſhould enter into his reſt, but that they ſhould fall in the wilderneſs, without ſetting foot in that pleaſant and moſt deſirable land. Diſcomfiture

and diſperſion were alſo threatened to their poſterity, that is, if they ſhould go on in the ſame ſpirit of rebellion, and fill up the meaſure of their fathers' iniquities; which they have ſince done, and are accordingly "overthrown among the nations, and ſcattered "among the lands" to this day. But do not thou ſuffer us, O Lord, to deſpiſe that "pleaſant land," which thou deſignedſt to be the inheritance of thy ſaints; whatever obſtructions may be thrown in our way, ſuffer us not, through ſloth and cowardice, to "diſbelieve thy word," to doubt the accompliſhment of thy promiſes, or to "murmur" againſt thy diſpenſations.

28. *They joined themſelves alſo unto Baal Peor, and ate the ſacrifices of the dead.* 29. *Thus they provoked* him *to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.* 30. *Then ſtood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and* ſo *the plague was ſtayed.* 31. *And that was counted unto him for righteouſneſs, unto all generations for evermore.*

By Balaam's advice, Numb. xxxi. 16. the Moabites and Midianites ſent their daughters among the people of Iſrael, who ſoon yielded to the temptation, and fornication ended in idolatry; nay, perhaps it might be a part of the Moabitiſh ritual; as we know it was among the religious ſervices paid by the latter heathens to ſome of their deities. By the "ſacrifices "of the dead," may be meant ſacrifices which were offered either to dead idols, or to men deified after death. To puniſh this apoſtaſy, the wrath of Jehovah went forth, and 24000 periſhed by the plague, which at length ceaſed, when Phinehas had "exe-

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"cuted judgment" upon Zimri and Coſbi, who ſeemed, indeed, to call aloud for it, by indulging their lawleſs paſſions in the midſt of ſo grievous a calamity, at a time when the whole congregation were humbling themſelves before God, at the door of the tabernacle. "Wherefore," ſaith God, "behold I give unto him my covenant of peace; and "he ſhall have it, and his ſeed after him, even the "covenant of an everlaſting prieſthood, becauſe he "was zealous for his God, and made an atonement "for the children of Iſrael." Numb. xxv. 12. It is moſt probable, as Dr. Hammond obſerves, that Phinehas, being the ſon of Eleazar, the ſon of Aaron, was one of the judges of Iſrael; and if ſo he had a clear commiſſion, for what he did, from Moſes, who had "ſaid to the judges of Iſrael, ſlay "ye every one his man that were joined to Baal-"Peor." Numb. xxv. 5. The caſe of Phinehas, therefore, is no precedent for uncommiſſioned zealots. In general, we learn from this part of the ſacred hiſtory, how acceptable to God is a well-timed zeal for his ſervice; as alſo, how dangerous it is to converſe too freely with thoſe of the other ſex, eſpecially when they have been educated in a falſe religion, or in no religion at all.

32. *They angered him alſo at the waters of ſtrife, ſo that it went ill with Moſes for their ſakes:* 33. *Becauſe they provoked his ſpirit, ſo that he ſpake unadviſedly with his lips.*

This inſtance of diſobedience was, in point of time, prior to that mentioned in the preceding verſes. It is related, Numb. xx. 2—13. The ſpirit of Moſes, though

though he was the meekeſt man upon earth, was ſo exaſperated and imbittered by continual murmurings and rebellions, that he is charged with "not having "believed God, to ſanctify him in the eyes of the "children of Iſrael;" and he was, on that account, denied the honour of bringing them into the land of promiſe. He had been commanded to ſmite the rock, that water might come forth. In anger he ſmote it twice, thus upbraiding the people, "Hear now, ye "rebels; muſt we fetch you water out of this rock!" He ſhewed not that affiance in God, that diſpoſition to glorify him before his people, which became him in the execution of his office. "The wrath of man" found admiſſion, and that "worketh not the righte-"ouſneſs of God." Thou, bleſſed Jeſus, art the only perfect pattern of patience and love; O grant to all, but above all, to the paſtors of thy flock, a "ſpirit" not eaſy to be "provoked," and lips not haſty to "ſpeak unadviſedly."

34. *They did not deſtroy the nations, concerning whom the* LORD *commanded them.* 35. *But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.* 36. *And they ſerved their idols: which were a ſnare unto them.*

When the iniquity of the Canaanites was full, it pleaſed God to extirpate the race, and Iſrael was commiſſioned to execute upon them the vengeance determined. But the conquerors ſuffered themſelves frequently to be ſeduced into all the abominations of the conquered, and ſpared their idolatrous altars, till themſelves came to bow down before them. Judg. ii. 2, 3. The Canaanites, againſt whom we Chriſtians militate, are our luſts, which, if they are ſpared and

treated

treated with, will prove "a ſnare" to us, and in time become our maſters. Mercy, ſhewn to them, is cruelty to ourſelves, and will always be found ſo, in the end.

37. *Yea, they ſacrificed their ſons and their daughters unto devils:* 38. *And ſhed innocent blood,* even *the blood of their ſons and of their daughters, whom they ſacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.*

It is plain, that the "devils," mentioned in the former of theſe two verſes, are "the idols of Canaan," mentioned in the latter. The word tranſlated, "devils," is שדים, literally, "The pourers forth;" by which it is highly probable, that the idolaters meant the great agents of nature, or the heavens, conſidered as giving rain, cauſing the earth to ſend out ſprings, and to put forth her increaſe, vegetables to yield and nouriſh their fruit, and animals to abound with milk, for the ſubſiſtence of their young.* Idolatry being a work of the devil, it is true, in fact, that what is offered to an idol, is offered to the devil; though the word שדים doth by no means imply it. We ſtand aſtoniſhed, doubtleſs, at this horrid, barbarous, and unnatural impiety, of offering children by fire to a Moloch: but how little is it conſidered, that children, brought up in the ways of ignorance, error, vanity, folly, and vice, are more effectually ſacrificed to the great adverſary of mankind!

* See the account given of the word by the learned and ingenious Mr. Parkhurſt, in his excellent Hebrew-Engliſh Lexicon.

39. *Thou*

39. *Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.* 40. *Therefore was the wrath of the* LORD *kindled againſt his people, inſomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.* 41. *And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.* 42. *Their enemies alſo oppreſſed them, and they were brought into ſubjection under their hand.* 43. *Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked* him *with their counſel, and were brought low for their iniquity.* 44. *Nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.* 45. *And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.* 46. *He made them alſo to be pitied of all thoſe that carried them away captives.*

This is an epitome of the hiſtory of the Iſraelites, from the time when they took poſſeſſion of Canaan, downwards. Tranſgreſſions brought on chaſtiſements; chaſtiſements produced repentance; and repentance obtained mercy. For their laſt and grand rebellion againſt the Son of God, and their King Meſſiah, whom they murdered, the ſore burden of heaven's diſpleaſure hath now reſted upon the nation, theſe ſeventeen hundred years; but their eyes are not yet opened; their hearts have not, hitherto, relented. How hath the "wrath of Jehovah been kindled "againſt his people, inſomuch that he hath abhor-"red his own inheritance;" How hath he "given "them into the hand of the heathen, and cauſed them "that hated them to rule over them!" How have "their enemies oppreſſed them;" how have they been "brought into ſubjection under their hand! Never-

"theleſs,

" theleſs, O Lord, regard their affliction, when thou " heareſt their cry;" grant them repentance firſt, and then pardon; " remember for them thy covenant;" let them change their mind, and do thou " change thy " purpoſe, according to the multitude of thy mercies; " make them alſo to be pitied of all thoſe that have " carried them captives;" cauſe them, upon their converſion, to find favour in the eyes of the nations; and do Thou, who haſt ſo long been " a light to " lighten the Gentiles," become once more " the " glory of thy people Iſrael."

47. *Save us, O* LORD, *our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praiſe.*

It appears from this verſe, that the Pſalm was written at a time when Iſrael was in captivity " among the heathen." Such will be the petition of the Jews hereafter to him whom they crucified; and ſuch is now the petition of the chriſtian church, that the elect may be finally gathered together, and united in one congregation, " to give thanks unto the name, " and triumph for ever in the praiſes of JESUS."

48. *Bleſſed* be *the* LORD *God of Iſrael from everlaſting to everlaſting, and let all the people ſay, Amen. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

At all times, in all places, and by all perſons, on earth and in heaven, in proſperity and adverſity, peace or perſecution, " the LORD God of Iſrael," the Saviour and Redeemer of his church, is to be " bleſſed;" nor can any ſituation exempt a believer from ſaying, " Amen, Hallelujah;" that is from bleſſing God, himſelf, and exciting others to do the ſame.

XXII DAY

XXII DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CVII.

ARGUMENT.

The Redeemed of the Lord are exhorted, in this Pſalm, 1—3. to praiſe him for his goodneſs in redeeming, and gathering them from the four quarters of the world. Their danger and their deliverance are repreſented under the four ſtriking images, 4—9. of travellers loſt in a wilderneſs, but directed and conducted home; 10—16. of priſoners reſcued from captivity; 17—22. of ſick and dying men reſtored to health; 23—32. of mariners preſerved in a ſtorm at ſea, and brought ſafe into port. 33—41. Some other inſtances of God's Providence in the government of the world, and of the church, are adduced and inſiſted on, for 42. the conſolation of the righteous, and 43. the inſtruction of all.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for* he is *good: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 2. *Let the redeemed of the* LORD *ſay ſo, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy:* 3. *And gathered them out of the lands, from the eaſt and from the weſt, from the north and from the ſouth.*

Eternal

Eternal mercy is the theme here propoſed; and they who have taſted it's ſweets, are invited to join in ſetting forth it's praiſes. The members of the Chriſtian church are now, in the moſt proper and emphatical ſenſe of the words, "the redeemed of "Jehovah, whom he hath redeemed from the hand "of the enemy, and gathered them," by the Goſpel, out of all lands, and from all the four quarters of the world, to form a church, and to ſupply the place of the apoſtate Jews; whoſe forefathers experienced, in type and ſhadow, the good things prepared for them and for us, in truth and ſubſtance. "Many," ſaith our Lord to the Jews, "ſhall come "from the eaſt, and from the weſt, and from the "north, and from the ſouth, and ſhall ſit down in "the kingdom of God—and you yourſelves ſhall be "thruſt out." Matt. viii. 11. Luk. xiii. 29. We converted Gentiles are the happy people, and we are taught in this Pſalm to celebrate that mercy which made us ſo.

4. *They wandered in the wilderneſs, in a ſolitary way, they found no city to dwell in.* 5. *Hungry and thirſty, their ſoul fainted in them.* 6. *Then they cried unto the* LORD *in their trouble, and* he *delivered them out of their diſtreſſes.* 7. *And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.*

The ſpiritual bleſſings of Redemption are repreſented by the Pſalmiſt under four exquiſitely beautiful and expreſſive images; which images are themſelves four ſpecial acts of God's providential care and love, ſhewn toward the bodies of men in the world; correſponding with as many works of grace, wrought on

on the ſouls of believers, in the church. The firſt of theſe pictures exhibiteth to our view a ſet of travellers loſt in a pathleſs deſert, and well nigh famiſhed, through want of neceſſary proviſions. They make their diſtreſſes known by prayer to Jehovah, and lo, he appears, as their guard, and their guide; he ſupplies all their neceſſities upon the journey, and conducts them in ſafety to their place of abode. Thus he dealt with Iſrael of old, in their paſſage, through the waſte and howling wilderneſs, from Egypt to Canaan. And thus he is ready to deal with us all. "The world," ſaith Lord *Bolingbroke, "is a "great wilderneſs, wherein mankind have wandered "about from the creation — We are not only paſ- "ſengers, or ſojourners, but abſolute ſtrangers at "the firſt ſteps we make in it." We are ſo, indeed; and too often, through our own fault, continue ſuch, to the laſt; we find not the way which leads to heaven, nor, if we did find it, have we ſtrength to travel in it, without the viaticum which cometh from thence, and which alone can bring us thither. Fervent and importunate prayer to the God of our ſalvation will procure, from above, knowledge to diſpel our ignorance, and grace to help our infirmities; the former will diſcover to us our road, the latter will enable us to walk in it, and both together will carry us, in due time, to "the city of our eter- "nal habitation."

8. *O that* men *would praiſe the* LORD for *his goodneſs, and* for *his wonderful works to the children of men!*

* Reflections on Hiſtory, Vol. I. P. 244, and 171.

9. *For*

9. *For he ſatisfieth the longing*, or, *thirſty ſoul, and filleth the hungry ſoul with goodneſs.*

The former of theſe two verſes is a chorus, repeated after the celebration of each of the four mercies here related. Literally it is, "Let them acknow-"ledge to Jehovah his mercy, and his wonders for "the children of Adam." And what can better deſerve our acknowledgement, than the proviſion made for the bodies and ſouls of Chriſtian travellers, in their way to that heavenly country and city, where "they ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, "neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat; "for the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne "ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living "fountains of waters: and God ſhall wipe away all "tears from their eyes." Rev. vii. 17.

10. *Such as ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death*, being *bound in affliction and iron:* 11. *Becauſe they rebelled againſt the words of God, and contemned the counſel of the moſt High:* 12. *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and* there was *none to help.* 13. *Then they cried unto the* LORD *in their trouble, and he ſaved them out of their diſtreſſes.* 14. *He brought them out of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, and brake their bands in ſunder.* 15. *O that* men *would praiſe the* LORD *for his goodneſs, and* for *his wonderful works to the children of men!* 16. *For he hath broken the gates of braſs, and cut the bars of iron in ſunder.*

In this ſecond piece of divine ſcenery, we behold a people groaning under all the miſeries of captivity, deprived of light and liberty, chained down in hor-

rid dungeons, and there expecting the day of execution. Theſe calamities they are repreſented as having brought upon themſelves, by their rebellion againſt God, who takes this method of humbling them. It ſucceeds, and brings them upon their knees to Him, who alone is able to deliver them. Moved by their cries, he exerts his power on their behalf, and frees them from the houſe of bondage. To a ſtate of corporal ſervitude, the Iſraelites, for their tranſgreſſions, were frequently reduced, and many times experienced, upon their repentance, the goodneſs of Jehovah in reſcuing them from it. But the grand and univerſal captivity is that of ſin and death; the grand and univerſal deliverance, for which all the redeemed of the Lord ought to praiſe his mercy, is that by Jeſus Chriſt. Adam and all his poſterity "rebelled againſt the words of God, and contemned "the counſel of the moſt High." By ſo doing, they ſubjected themſelves to a ſlavery, the heavieſt and bittereſt of all others. The devil led them captive at his will, and ſet over them their own inſatiable luſts and paſſions, as ſo many taſkmaſters, to afflict, and keep them under. By theſe the ſoul is confined ſo cloſe in priſon, and bound with ſo many chains, that it cannot get forth to do the will of God, even when that is made known to it. Of mankind in this ſtate how truly may it be ſaid, and how often in Scripture is it ſaid, under theſe and the like figures, "They "ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, being "faſt bound in miſery, and" bands ſtronger than "iron—He alſo brought down their heart through "heavineſs, they fell down, and there was none to "help!"

"help!" A ſenſe of this his woful condition forces the ſinner to "cry unto the Lord Jeſus in his trou-"ble," and to ſay, "O wretched man that I am, "who ſhall deliver me from this body of death? "Bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may give "thanks unto thy name." And now, his prayer is heard, the grace of Chriſt cometh to his aſſiſtance, and he is made "free indeed." His chains, like thoſe of St. Peter, fall off at the word of his deliverer; he is "ſaved out of his diſtreſs; he is brought "out of darkneſs and the ſhadow of death," into the glorious light and liberty of the ſons of God. The joy conſequent upon ſuch a deliverance will be exceeded only by that which ſhall take place in the hearts, and be expreſſed by the voices of the redeemed, on the day when Chriſt ſhall accompliſh the redemption of their bodies alſo, as he hath already effected that of his own, from the power of the grave; when he ſhall daſh in pieces the brazen gates, and adamantine bars of that priſon-houſe, put an end for ever to the bondage of corruption, and lead captivity captive into the higheſt heavens.

17. *Fools becauſe of their tranſgreſſion, and becauſe of their iniquities are afflicted.* 18. *Their ſoul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death.* 19. *Then they cry unto the* LORD *in their trouble, he ſaveth them out of their diſtreſſes.* 20. *He ſent his word, and healed them, and delivered* them *from their deſtruction.* 21. *O that* men *would praiſe the* LORD *for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.* 22. *And let them ſacri-*

fice the ſacrifices of thankſgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

The recovery of men from ſickneſs affords a third image of the benefits conferred on our nature, by the Redeemer. Sickneſs, as we are here informed, is the puniſhment of human folly and iniquity. When it is extreme, it deprives man of all reliſh and appetite for his food; nay, it makes him loath and deteſt the very ſight and ſmell of that which ſhould nouriſh and ſupport him; in which caſe, he muſt waſte away, and ſoon "draw near to the gates of death." But from thoſe dreadful gates the power of God can ſnatch us, when we are juſt about to enter them. To an infirm and emaciated body he can reſtore health, ſtrength, and beauty; for diſeaſes are his miniſters and meſſengers; they viſit us at his command, and at his command they retire, and we recover again. The Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, "becauſe of their "tranſgreſſions, and becauſe of their iniquities, were "often afflicted" with a plague. But when they repented, and atonement was made, the plague ceaſed. They were ſtung by fiery ſerpents; but when they "cried unto Jehovah, he ſent his Word, and "healed them. They were troubled," as the author of the book of Wiſdom obſerves, "for a ſmall ſea-"ſon, that they might be admoniſhed, having a "ſign of Salvation to put them in remembrance of "the commandment of thy law. For he that turned "himſelf towards it, was not ſaved by the thing that "he ſaw; but by thee who art the Saviour of all." Wiſd. xvi. 6, 7. Sentence of death was paſſed upon Hezekiah; he already ſaw himſelf at "the gates of

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"the grave," and expected no more to "behold man "with the inhabitants of the world." Yet his prayer prevailed for a reſpite, and fifteen years were added to his life. Iſai. xxxviii. Now the mind, by reaſon of ſin, is not leſs ſubject to infirmities than the body. Theſe infirmities reduce a man to a ſtate of languor and liſtleſſneſs; he finds himſelf incapable of action, indiſpoſed for the reception of divine truths, without taſte for knowledge, or inclination for virtue; he even nauſeates the book of God, and the bread of heaven; and the life of faith is in great danger. But the caſe is not deſperate, while there is breath enough left to call in, by prayer, the great Phyſician of ſpirits. The moſt inveterate malady gives place to his efficacious medicines; appetite revives, health returns, and the believer is reinſtated in the vigour and beauty of holineſs. Let all who have been thus "healed, and ſaved from deſtruction," either of body or ſoul, "acknowledge to Jehovah his mercy, "and his wonders wrought for the children of "Adam: let them ſacrifice the ſacrifices of thankſ-"giving, and declare his works with rejoicing."

23. *They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great waters:* 24. *Theſe ſee the works of the* LORD, *and his wonders in the deep.* 25. *For he commandeth, and raiſeth the ſtormy wind, which liſteth up the waves thereof.* 26. *They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths, their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble.* 27. *They reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end*; Heb. *all their wiſdom* or *ſkill is ſwallowed up.* 28. *Then they cry unto the* LORD *in their trouble, and he bringeth*

them out of their diſtreſſes. 29. *He maketh the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves thereof are ſtill.* 30. *Then are they glad becauſe they be quiet; ſo he bringeth them unto their deſired haven.* 31. *O that men would praiſe the* LORD *for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* 32. *Let them exalt him alſo in the congregation of the people, and praiſe him in the aſſembly of the elders.*

The fourth ſimilitude choſen to portray the dangers of our preſent ſtate, and the goodneſs of God diſplayed in our ſalvation, is taken from that ſignal inſtance of the divine power and providence, the preſervation of mariners in a ſtorm at ſea. The deſcription which the Pſalmiſt hath given us of ſuch an event admitteth of no comment. Experience alone can illuſtrate it's beauty, evince it's truth, and point out the propriety of the circumſtances which are ſelected to furniſh us with a full and compleat idea of the whole. Few of us, indeed, are ever likely to be in that terrible ſituation. But then, we cannot help reflecting, that there is a ſhip, in which we are all embarked; there is a troubled ſea, on which we all ſail; there are ſtorms by which we are all frequently overtaken; and there is a haven which we all deſire to behold, and to enter. For the church is a ſhip,; the world is a ſea; temptations, perſecutions, and afflictions are the waves of it; the prince of the power of the air is the ſtormy wind which raiſes them; and heaven is the only port of reſt and ſecurity. Often, during the voyage, for our puniſhment, or our trial, God permitteth us to be thus aſſaulted. The ſucceſſion and the violence of our troubles, the elevations

tions and depreſſions of mind and fortune, the uncertainty of our counſels, and our utter inability to help ourſelves, are finely repreſented by the multitude and impetuoſity of the waves, the toſſings and agitations of the veſſel, the confuſion, terror, and diſtreſs among the ſailors. In both caſes, prayer is the proper effect, and the only remedy left. With the earneſtneſs of affrighted mariners, who will then be devout, though they never were ſo before, we ſhould "cry unto the Lord Jeſus in our trouble;" we ſhould, as it were, "awake" him, like the diſciples, with repetitions of, "Lord, ſave us, we periſh!" Then will he ariſe, and rebuke the authors of our tribulation, ſaying unto them, "Peace, be ſtill;" and they ſhall hear, and obey his voice. "He will "make the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves thereof "ſhall be ſtill;" and at length he will "bring us" in peace, joy, and gladneſs, "to our deſired haven," there to "exalt him in the congregation" of his choſen, and "praiſe him in the" great "aſſembly" of ſaints and angels. This is the conſummation ſo devoutly wiſhed and requeſted by the church for all her children, at the time of their baptiſm, that they, "being delivered from God's wrath, may be received "into the Ark of Chriſt's church; and, being ſted-"faſt in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in "charity, may ſo paſs the Waves of this trouble-"ſome world, that finally they may come to the "Land of everlaſting life." Thus we ſee there is no ſpiritual evil, out of which God is not both able and willing to deliver us, when we call upon him. Are we ignorant of the way to the heavenly city? He will guide and conduct us thither. Are we bound

with the chains of ſin and death? He will looſe and deliver us. Are our minds diſeaſed and languid? He will heal and invigorate them. Are we in danger of being overwhelmed by the troubles of the world? He will preſerve us in the midſt of them, until he bid them ceaſe. Of his power and inclination to do theſe things for our ſouls, he hath given aſſurance to all men, by thoſe pledges of his love, the benefits and bleſſings conferred on the bodies of his people, in leading them through the wilderneſs to Canaan; in reſcuing them ſo often from the miſeries of captivity; in healing their diſeaſes; and in ſaving thoſe of them, who "did buſineſs in great "waters," from the perils of the ſea. Certainly, the mind of man cannot have a nobler ſubject for meditation in this world, than the wonders of Providence, conſidered as repreſenting the mercies of Redemption.

33. *He turneth rivers into a wilderneſs, and the water ſprings into dry ground.* 34. *A fruitful land into barrenneſs, for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.* 35. *He turneth the wilderneſs into a ſtanding water, and dry ground into water ſprings;* 36. *And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;* 37. *And ſow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increaſe.* 38. *He bleſſed them alſo, ſo that they are multiplied greatly, and ſuffereth not their cattle to decreaſe.*

In this latter part of the Pſalm, the prophet farther exemplifieth the power, the juſtice, and the goodneſs of God: his power, in being able to change the very nature of things; his juſtice, and his goodneſs, in ſo doing, either to puniſh the rebellious,

lious, or to reward the obedient. A well watered and fertile country ſhall, for the ſins of it's inhabitants, be converted into a dry and a barren one. The plain of Jordan, which, before the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, was "well watered every where, "like the garden of Jehovah," Gen. xiii. 10. hath, ſince that overthrow, been a land of ſalt, and ſulphur, and perpetual ſterility. Nay, even the once fruitful Paleſtine itſelf, that flowed with milk and honey, is at this day a region of ſuch utter deſolation, that the very poſſibility of it's ever having ſufficed to maintain the people who formerly poſſeſſed it, is now called in queſtion. And indeed, while the rain of heaven ſhall continue to be in the hand of God, how eaſy it is for him, by withholding it during a few months, to blaſt all the moſt promiſing hopes of man; and, inſtead of plenty, joy, and health, to viſit him with famine, peſtilence, and death. On the other hand, when the ways of a people pleaſe him, he can rid them of theſe dreadful gueſts; the rain ſhall deſcend from above, the ſprings ſhall riſe from beneath, the earth ſhall yield her increaſe, the cattle ſhall feed in large paſtures, the ſeaſons ſhall be kindly, the air ſalutary, and the ſmiling face of nature ſhall atteſt the loving kindneſs of the Lord. Thus, in the diſpenſations of grace, hath he dealt with Jews and Gentiles. The ſynagogue of the former, once rich in faith, watered with the benedictions of heaven, fruitful in prophets and ſaints, adorned with the ſervices of religion, and the preſence of Jehovah, hath been, ſince the murder of the ſon of God, curſed with infidelity, parched like-

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the withered tops of the mountains of Gilboah, barren and deſolate as the land of their ancient reſidence, whoſe naked rocks ſeem to declare to all the world the hard-heartedneſs and unprofitableneſs of it's old poſſeſſors. When the "fruitful field" thus became a "foreſt," the "wilderneſs," at the ſame time, became a "fruitful field." A church was planted in the Gentile world, and "the Spirit was poured out "upon it from on high." In that "wilderneſs did "waters break out, and ſtreams in that deſert." There was faith ſown, and holineſs was the univerſal product. "The wilderneſs and the ſolitary place "was glad, and the deſert rejoiced, and bloſſomed "as the roſe. It bloſſomed abundantly, and rejoiced "even with joy and ſinging; the glory of Leba-"non was given unto it, the excellency of Carmel "and Sharon;" the privileges and honours of the ſynagogue were conferred upon the church; and the nations now "ſaw the glory of Jehovah, and the ex-"cellency of God." Iſai. xxxii. 15. xxxv. 1, 2. Spiritual increaſe, health, and plenty, ſpiritual peace, joy, and happineſs, appeared in beauteous and lovely proceſſion, and the bleſſing of Jeſus was upon this his new inheritance, in every way.

39. *Again they are miniſhed, and brought low, through oppreſſion, affliction, and ſorrow.* 40. *He poureth contempt upon princes, and cauſeth them to wander in the wilderneſs,* where there is *no way.* 41. *Yet ſetteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh* him *families like a flock.*

But let not thoſe, who have received the largeſt ſhare of heaven's favours, therefore boaſt and preſume.

ſume. The continuance of thoſe favours dependeth upon the continuance of their fidelity and obedience. Mighty empires, with their "princes," have, for their wickedneſs, been "brought low" by the arm of Jehovah, and laid in the duſt, while nations "poor," and feeble, and never thought of, have "been taken from thence, and exalted over them. What revolutions have, in like manner, happened, and, probably, are ſtill to happen, in the church! Jeruſalem is fallen, through unbelief; and the Gentile church ſtandeth only by faith, from which, if ſhe depart, vengeance will be executed on her likewiſe. Yet, even in the worſt of times, there is a promiſe, that "the poor" in ſpirit, the faithful and humble diſciples of the holy Jeſus, ſhall be preſerved from the evil, and "ſet on high from affliction;" yea, that they ſhall be multiplied "like a flock," under the care of the good Shepherd, to preſerve his name, and to continue a church upon the earth, until he ſhall return again.

42. *The righteous ſhall ſee, and rejoice; and all iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth.*

Two conſequences will follow from this alternate diſplay of the mercy and the judgment of God. The righteous, finding themſelves ſtill the objects of the former, will have cauſe to rejoice and give thanks; and the wicked, when viſited with the latter, will be forced, by their ſilence at leaſt, to own that their puniſhment is juſt. This will certainly be the caſe at the laſt day, when the diſpenſations of God, and the perfect rule of equity obſerved

obſerved in them, ſhall be manifeſted to all the world.

43. *Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the* LORD. Or, *Who is wiſe? and he will obſerve theſe things; and they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the* LORD.

A truly "wiſe" perſon will treaſure up in his heart the contents of this moſt inſtructive and delightful Pſalm. By ſo doing, he will fully "underſtand" and comprehend the weakneſs and wretchedneſs of man, and the power and "loving kindneſs" of God, who not for our merit, but for his mercy's ſake, diſpelleth our ignorance, breaketh off our ſins, healeth our infirmities, preſerveth us in temptations, placeth us in his church, enricheth us with his grace, ſhelteth us from perſecution, bleſſeth us in time, and will crown us in eternity.

XXII DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm is compoſed of parts taken, without any material alteration, from two others. The firſt five verſes occur in Pſ. lvii. 7—11; the laſt eight are found in Pſ. lx. 5—12. The reader is therefore referred to the expoſition already given of thoſe Pſalms.

PSALM

PSALM CIX.

ARGUMENT.

St. Peter, Acts i. 20. hath taught us to apply the predictions in this Pſalm to the betrayers and murderers of Meſſiah, who is, conſequently, the perſon here ſpeaking, and 1—5. complaining of the injuries which he ſuffered from them; after which, 6—20. he forewarneth them of all the judgments and ſore calamities that ſhould come upon them and their poſterity; 21—25. he returneth to the ſubject of his paſſion; 26—29. repeateth his ſupplications for himſelf and his church; and 30, 31. concludeth with an act of praiſe.—In this light was the Pſalm conſidered and interpreted in the ancient church, by Chryſoſtom, Jerome, Auguſtine, Theodoret, and others.

1. *Hold not thy peace, O God of my praiſe:* i. e. *who art the ſubject of my praiſe.* 2. *For the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful are opened againſt me: they have ſpoken againſt me with a lying tongue.* 3. *They compaſſed me about alſo with words of hatred; and fought againſt me without a cauſe.* 4. *For my love they are my adverſaries: but I* give myſelf unto *prayer.* 5. *And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*

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The holy Jeſus, in theſe words, maketh ſupplication to the Father for redreſs and deliverance. He complaineth of the manner in which he was treated, when "he came unto his own, and his own received "him not." John i. 11. Sometimes, "the mouth "of the wicked was opened upon him*," roaring againſt him, like the roaring of lions, while they cried out, "He is a Samaritan, and hath a devil, "and is mad; away with him, away with him, cru-"cify him, crucify him." Sometimes, "deceitful "and lying tongues" were employed, either to intangle and entrap him in his talk, or to bear falſe witneſs againſt him. And all this was done, not only "without a cauſe," but men were his bitter and implacable "adverſaries, in return for" that "love" which brought him from heaven, to ſave them with an everlaſting ſalvation. Let the afflicted and traduced diſciple rejoice, in that he is conformed to the image of his Maſter. And from the example of that Maſter let him learn what courſe to take, when in ſuch circumſtances—"But I give "myſelf unto prayer."

6. † *Thou wilt ſet a wicked man*, or, *the wicked one*

* Hæc autem cecinit David ſpirituali ſenſu in perſonâ Chriſti a Judæis impetiti omnimodis blaſphemiis. BOSSUET.

† As moſt of the following verbs are in the future tenſe, and the reſt have evidently a predictive and future import, the ſame liberty is here taken, as in Pſ. lxix. of rendering them throughout uniformly in that tenſe: by which means the curſes pronounced in this Pſalm will at once appear to be of the ſame import with thoſe in the xxviiith chapter of Deuteronomy. The reader is intreated, when he ſhall have peruſed the Pſalm, to turn to that chapter, and judge for himſelf.

over him, and Satan ſhall ſtand at his right hand. 7. *When he is judged, he ſhall be condemned, and his prayer ſhall become ſin.*

A tranſition is here made to the adverſaries of Meſſiah; primarily to Judas, "who was guide to "them that took Jeſus;" Acts i. 16. ſecondarily to the ſynagogue, of whom Judas may be conſidered as an epitome and repreſentative. It it foretold, that by betraying and murdering the beſt of maſters, they ſhould ſubject themſelves to the tyranny of the worſt; that they ſhould become ſlaves to the "wick-"ed one," who ſhould juſtly be "ſet over them," when they had delivered themſelves into his hands; that "Satan," who had ſtood by them to tempt them, ſhould "ſtand at their right hand" to accuſe them, at the tribunal of God; that when tried, they would be convicted and "condemned," and even their "prayer" would be abomination in the ſight of the Lord, as being offered without true contrition and repentance, without faith, hope, or charity. Such is the wretched ſtate of the Jews, eſtranged from God, and in bondage to the devil; ſuch the prayers, which, from hardened and malignant hearts, they continually utter, for the exciſion of all Chriſtians, and for the extirpation of that bleſſed Name, on which Chriſtians call. Theſe prayers, inſtead of lightening the burden of their ſins, certainly add to it's weight. Enable us, O Lord Jeſu, to reſiſt Satan as a tempter, that he may not be our accuſer; and grant us always ſo to pray, that our prayers may be heard.

8. *His*

8. *His days ſhall be few, and another ſhall take his office.*

This is the verſe which St. Peter hath cited and applied, in his diſcourſe to the diſciples, at the election of Matthias into the place of Judas. "Men "and brethren, this ſcripture muſt needs have been "fulfilled, which the Holy Ghoſt by the mouth of "David ſpake before concerning Judas, who was "guide to them that took Jeſus. For he was num-"bered with us, and had obtained part of this mi-"niſtry. Now this man purchaſed a field with the "reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burſt "aſunder in the midſt, and all his bowels guſhed "out—For it is written in the book of Pſalms, Let "his habitation be deſolate, and let no man dwell "therein: and, His biſhoprick let another take." The former of theſe two citations is made from Pſ. lxix. 25. the latter is a part of the verſe now before us. If Judas, therefore, be the perſon whoſe deſtruction the ſufferer foretelleth, the perſon ſpeaking in this prophetical Pſalm muſt of neceſſity be our Lord himſelf, who ſuffered by the treachery of Judas. In Pſ. lxix. 25. the prediction is in the plural number, "Their habitation ſhall be void;" yet St. Peter applies it, in the ſingular number, to Judas. The paſſage in our Pſalm is ſingular, yet applicable not to Judas only, but to the whole nation of the Jews; whoſe "days," after they had crucified the Lord of glory, "were few;" who were diſpoſſeſſed of the place and "office" which they held as the church of God, and to which, with all it's honours and privileges, the Gentile Chriſtian church

church ſucceeded in their ſtead, when the Aaronical prieſthood was aboliſhed, and that of the true Melchizedek eſtabliſhed for ever.

9. *His children ſhall be fatherleſs, and his wife a widow.* 10. *His children ſhall be continually vagabonds, and beg: they ſhall ſeek* their bread *alſo out of deſolate places.*

If, by the wretched death of Judas, his wife became a widow, and his children orphans, vagabonds, and beggars, their fate was but a prelude to that of thouſands and ten thouſands of the ſame nation, whoſe huſbands and fathers came afterwards to a miſerable end, at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Their children, and childrens children have ſince been "continually vagabonds" upon the earth, in the ſtate of Cain, when he had murdered his righteous brother; not cut off, but marvellouſly preſerved for puniſhment and woe. Having nothing of their own, they roam through all parts of the world, civilized or barbarous, the ſcorn and contempt of mankind. And even if they are able to amaſs wealth, their unparalleled avarice ſtill keeps them poor and beggarly in the midſt of it. Thus Dr. Hammond, in his Annotation on theſe verſes—"By this is deſcribed, in a very lively manner, the condition of the "Jewiſh poſterity, ever ſince their anceſtors fell "under that ſignal vengeance, for the crucifying of "Chriſt. Firſt, their deſolations and vaſtations in "their own country; and being ejected thence, "Secondly, their continual Wanderings from place "to place, ſcattered over the face of the earth; and, "Thirdly, their remarkable Covetouſneſs, keeping

"them always Poor and Beggarly, be they never ſo "rich, and continually labouring and moiling for "gain, as the pooreſt are wont to do; and this is "continually the conſtant courſe attending this peo-"ple, whereſoever they are ſcattered."

11. *The extortioner* or, *creditor ſhall catch*, or, *ſeize all that he hath, and the ſtranger ſhall ſpoil his labour.* 12. *There ſhall be none to extend mercy to him: neither ſhall there be any to favour his fatherleſs children.*

Since the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, how often hath this race been ſeized, pillaged, ſtripped, and impoveriſhed, by prince and people, in all the nations of the known world, none appearing, as in other caſes, to "favour and extend mercy" to them*? "They have had no nation, none to avenge their "grievous wrong, which the Lord God of their "forefathers had ordained they ſhould ſuffer, at all "times, and in all places, whereſoever they have "come, without redreſs. Nay, their general carri-"age hath been ſo odious and prepoſterous, that "albeit the Chriſtian magiſtrates had conſpired to-"gether for their good, they would themſelves have "certainly provoked their own miſery." Thus that excellent Divine, the learned and pious Dr. Jackſon, Vol. I. P. 142, and 135, whoſe reflections upon the hiſtory of the Jews, at and ſince their diſperſion, it were to be wiſhed that every Chriſtian could peruſe. For, as he himſelf obſerves, "Chriſtian parents,

* Thou ſhalt be only oppreſſed and ſpoiled evermore, and no man ſhall ſave thee—The fruit of thy land and all thy labours, ſhall a nation which thou knoweſt not, eat up, and thou ſhalt be only oppreſſed and cruſhed alway. Deut. xxviii. 29. 33.

"whether

"whether bodily or ſpiritual, ſhould be as careful "to inſtruct their children what the Lord hath done "to theſe Jews, as the Iſraelites ſhould have been to "tell their ſons what God had done to Pharaoh." Ibid. P. 152.

13. *His poſterity ſhall be cut off, and in the generation following, their name ſhall be blotted out.* 14. *The iniquity of his fathers ſhall be remembered with the* LORD, *and the ſin of his mother ſhall not be blotted out.* 15. *They ſhall be before the* LORD *continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

The traiterous and rebellious "poſterity" of traiterous and rebellious parents ſuffered an "exci-"ſion" by the Roman ſword, and "in the genera-"tion following, their name," as a church and civil polity, was "blotted out" of the liſt of ſtates and kingdoms upon earth. "The iniquity of their fa-"thers," which they had filled up, "was remem-"bered with Jehovah, and the ſin of their mother," that is, perhaps, of the ſynagogue of Jeruſalem, now in bondage with her children, "was not blotted out; "that upon them might come all the righteous blood "ſhed, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the "blood of Zachanias, whom they ſlew between the "temple and the altar." Matt. xxii. 25. The blood of the prophets cried for vengeance againſt thoſe who crucified the Lord of the prophets. God hid not his face any longer from all theſe horrible tranſgreſſions, but "they were before him continually," and occaſioned him to "cut off the memory" of his people, once precious and fragrant, "from the "earth;" ſo that while apoſtles and martyrs are

annually commemorated with honour, and their good deeds, bloſſoming out of the duſt, perfume the church, and delight the ſouls of the faithful, the names of "Judas," and "Jew," are never mentioned but with contempt and abhorrence.

16. *Becauſe that he remembered not to ſhew mercy, but perſecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even ſlay the broken in heart.*

The crime which brought upon it's perpetrators all the aboyementioned judgments and calamities, is here pointed out too plainly to be miſtaken. They "remembered not to ſhew mercy" to him, who ſhewed it to all the world; they "perſecuted" him who for our ſakes became "poor," and who condeſcended to aſk of his creatures water to drink; they betrayed and murdered the lowly and afflicted Jeſus, whoſe "heart" was "broken" with ſorrow for their ſins, and with a ſenſe of the puniſhment due to them. How long will it be, ere the brethren of this moſt innocent and moſt injured Joſeph "ſay "one to another, We are verily guilty concerning "our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his "ſoul, when he beſought us, and we would not "hear: THEREFORE is this diſtreſs come upon us!" Gen. xlii. 21.

17. *As he loved curſing, ſo ſhall it come unto him: as he delighted not in bleſſing, ſo ſhall it be far from him.* 18. *As he clothed himſelf with curſing, like as with his garment, ſo ſhall it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.* 19. *It ſhall be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.* 20. *This ſhall be the reward*

ward of mine adverſaries from the LORD, *and of them that ſpeak evil againſt my ſoul.*

They who reject Chriſt, reject the fountain of "bleſſing," and chuſe a "curſe" for their portion; and this portion, when they have finally made their choice, will certainly be given to them in full meaſure. The curſe, that lighted on the Jewiſh nation, is reſembled, for it's univerſality and adheſion, to a "garment," which covereth the whole man, and is "girded," cloſe about his loins; for it's diffuſive and penetrating nature, to "water," which from the ſtomach paſſeth into the "bowels," and is diſperſed through all the veſſels of the frame; and to "oil," which imperceptibly inſinuates itſelf into the very "bones." When that unhappy multitude, aſſembled before Pontius Pilate, pronounced the words, "His blood be on us, and on our children," Matt. xxvii. 25. then did they put on the envenomed garment, which has ſtuck to and tormented the nation ever ſince; then did they eagerly ſwallow down that deadly draught, the effects whereof have been the infatuation and miſery of 1700 years! If ſuch, in this world, be "the reward of Meſſiah's adverſaries, "and of thoſe who ſpake evil againſt him," what will hereafter be the vengeance inflicted on thoſe who "crucify him afreſh, and put him again to an "open ſhame?" Heb. vi. 6. And what will be the operation of the ſentence, "Go, ye curſed," upon the bodies and ſouls of the wicked; how will it at once affect all the ſenſes of the former, and all the faculties of the latter, with pain, anguiſh, horror,

and deſpair! Think on theſe things, ye ſinners, tremble, and repent!

21. *But do thou, for me, O* GOD *the Lord,* Heb. JEHOVAH *the Lord, for thy name's ſake: becauſe thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.* 22. *For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.* 23. *I am gone like the ſhadow when it declineth: I am toſſed up and down as the locuſt.* 24. *My knees are weak through faſting, and my fleſh faileth of fatneſs.* 25. *I became alſo a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me, they ſhaked their heads.*

In this laſt part of the Pſalm, Meſſiah petitioneth for deliverance, urging to the Father his power as "Lord," the honour of his "name," and the greatneſs of his "mercy." He then pleadeth his own humiliation, and affliction, his "poverty," and "heart" felt agony of grief. Drawing towards the evening of his mortal life, he compareth himſelf to a "ſhadow, declining," and about to vaniſh from the earth, where he hath no reſt, being perſecuted from place to place, as a "locuſt" is driven hither and thither, by the ſtormy wind and tempeſt; while enfeebled and emaciated by frequent "faſtings," and long want of food during his paſſion, he was ready to ſink under his burden; and what aggravated all his ſufferings, was, that he met with no pity and compaſſion from thoſe around him; his enemies "reproached" and reviled him, "ſhaking their "heads, and ſaying, Ah thou that deſtroyeſt the "temple, and buildeſt it in three days, ſave thyſelf," &c. Matt. xxvii. 39. Nor are we to ſuppoſe our Lord thus praying for his natural body only, but alſo

alſo for his myſtical body, the church, that from all diſtreſſes, perſecutions, and inſults, the members of that body may in time be delivered, like their bleſſed Head, by a joyful reſurrection to eternal life.

26. *Help me, O* LORD *my God; O ſave me, according to thy mercy.* 27. *That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou* LORD *haſt done it.*

The reſurrection of Chriſt was to be the great demonſtration of Jehovah's power; and it was publiſhed, as ſuch, by the Apoſtles, to all the nations of the world, who thereupon believed, and were converted. The Jews alone hardened their hearts againſt that proof, and continued impenitent.

28. *They will curſe, but thou ſhalt bleſs: when they ariſe, they ſhall be aſhamed; but thy ſervant ſhall rejoice.* 29. *Mine adverſaries ſhall be cloathed with ſhame: and they ſhall cover themſelves with their own confuſion as with a mantle.*

The apoſtate ſons of Iſrael, though they have been ſo long "confounded" and blaſted by the breath of heaven's diſpleaſure, yet continue "curſing" and blaſpheming, as it is here foretold that they ſhould do. But God hath "bleſſed" his Son Jeſus, and through him all nations, who have been adopted into his family, and made his children by baptiſm; yea, and they ſhall be bleſſed, and enter, by thouſands and millions, into the "joy" of their Lord, in that day when his crucifiers ſhall have no "covering," but their own "ſhame" and "confuſion."

30. *I will greatly praiſe the* LORD *with my mouth: yea, I will praiſe him among the multitude.* 31. *For he*

ſhall ſtand at the right hand of the poor, to ſave him *from thoſe that condemn his ſoul.*

The former of theſe two verſes is parallel to that which St. Paul citeth from Pſ. xxii. 22. "He that "ſanctifieth and they who are ſanctified are all of "one; for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call "them brethren, ſaying, I will declare thy name "unto my brethren, in the midſt of the church will "I ſing praiſe unto thee." Heb. ii. 11. Great is the joy of the redeemed upon earth; greater will it be, after the reſurrection of the dead, in the courts of heaven. Jeſus, unjuſtly put to death, and now riſen again, is a perpetual advocate and interceſſor for his people, ever ready to appear on their behalf, againſt the iniquitous ſentence of a corrupt world, and the malice of the grand Accuſer.

XXIII DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CX.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, David propheſieth concerning 1. the exaltation of Chriſt; 2. the ſceptre of his kingdom; 3. the character of his ſubjects; 4. his everlaſting prieſthood; 5, 6. his tremendous victories and judgments; 7. the means of his obtaining both kingdom and prieſthood, by his ſufferings and reſurrection. Parts of this prophecy are cited and

and applied in the New Teſtament, by our Lord himſelf, Matt. xxii. 43. by St. Peter, Acts ii. 34. by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 25. Heb. v. 6. The church, likewiſe, hath appointed it as one of the Proper Pſalms to be read on Chriſtmas Day. It appertaineth literally and ſolely to King Meſſiah.

1. *The* LORD *ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool.*

We are here informed of Jehovah's eternal and unchangeable decree concerning the kingdom of Meſſiah, it's extenſion, power, and duration. That Meſſiah ſhould, after his ſufferings, be thus exalted, was determined in the divine counſel and covenant, before the world began. Whether we ſuppoſe the Pſalmiſt to be ſpeaking of that determination, or of it's actual accompliſhment at the time of Chriſt's aſcenſion into heaven, it maketh no great difference. The ſubſtance of the decree is the ſame. It was addreſſed by the Father to the Son, by Jehovah to Meſſiah, whom David in ſpirit ſtyleth אדני "my "Lord;" one that ſhould come after him, as his offſpring according to the fleſh; but one, in dignity of perſon, and greatneſs of power, far ſuperior to him, and to every earthly potentate; King of kings, and Lord of lords; God and man united in one perſon. To this perſon it was ſaid by the Father, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine ene-"mies thy footſtool;" in other words, Seeing, O my Son Meſſiah, thou haſt glorified me on the earth,

and

and finiſhed the work which I gave thee to do, the great work of man's redemption; take now the throne prepared for thee from the foundation of the world; behold, all power is given unto thee; enter upon thy mediatorial kingdom, and reign till every oppoſer ſhall have ſubmitted himſelf to thee, and ſin and death ſhall have felt thy all-conquering arm.

2. *The* LORD *ſhall ſend the rod of thy ſtrength out of Sion: rule thou in the midſt of thine enemies.*

In the foregoing verſe, David related the words ſpoken by the Father to the Son. In this, he himſelf, as a prophet, directeth his ſpeech to King Meſſiah, predicting the glorious conſequences of his inthronization, and the manner in which "his enemies" are to be "made his footſtool." The "rod, or ſceptre" of Chriſt's "ſtrength" is his Word, accompanied by his Spirit. The law was given to Iſrael from Sinai, but the Goſpel went forth from "Sion;" it was "preached to all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem;" Luke xxiv. 47. there began the ſpiritual kingdom of Jeſus; there were the firſt converts made; and from thence the faith was propagated, by the Apoſtles, to the ends of the earth. This David ſeeing beforehand, cries out, "Rule thou in the "midſt of thine enemies!" Go on, victorious prince; plant the ſtandard of thy croſs among the thickeſt ranks of the adverſary; and, in oppoſition to both Jew and Gentile, tumultuouſly raging againſt thee, erect and eſtabliſh thy church throughout the world! This was accordingly done with marvellous ſpeed and ſucceſs; and the church, thus erected and eſtabliſhed among the nations, hath been as marvellouſly

pre-

preſerved, "in the midſt of her enemies," unto this day; yea, and the world ſhall ſooner be deſtroyed, than ſhe ſhall ceaſe to be preſerved.

3. Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holineſs: from the womb of the morning thou haſt the dew of thy youth.

The bleſſed effects of the Goſpel, upon it's publication, are here foretold. "The people" of Chriſt are thoſe given him by his Father, and gathered to him by the preachers of his word. "The day of "his power" is the ſeaſon of their converſion, when the corruptions of nature can no longer hold out againſt the prevailing influences of grace; when the heart, will, and affections turn from the world to God; and they make, as the firſt diſciples did, a free and voluntary offer of themſelves, and all they have, to their Redeemer. Then it is, that they appear "in the beauties of holineſs," adorned with humility, faith, hope, love, and all the graces of the Spirit. With regard to the laſt clauſe of this verſe, Biſhop Lowth, in his admired Lectures*, has obſerved, and proved, that it may be fairly conſtrued to this effect—"More than the dew from the womb "of the morning is the dew of thy progeny;" that is, Thy children, begotten to thee through the Goſpel, ſhall exceed in number, as well as brightneſs and beauty, the ſpangles of early dew, which the morning diſcloſeth to the delighted eye of the beholder. The whole verſe, therefore, containeth a lively character of the ſubjects of Chriſt's ſpiritual

* Prælect. x.

kingdom,

kingdom, who are described by their relation to him as "his people;" by their "willingness" to obey and serve him; by their honourable attire, the rich and splendid robes of "holiness;" and by their multitudes, resembling the drops of "dew" upon the grass.

4. *The* LORD *hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

From Christ's regal office, and the administration thereof by the sceptre of his Word and Spirit, the prophet passeth to his sacerdotal office, which was also conferred on him by the decree of the Father, and that decree, as we are here told, ratified by an oath; "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, "or, change his purpose." The oath of God was the great seal of heaven, designed to intimate the importance of the deed to which it was set, and "to "shew to the heirs of promise the immutability of "his counsel." Heb. vi. 17. Whether this oath passed at the actual consecration of Messiah to the priesthood upon his ascension, or at his designation thereto by covenant before the world, sufficient it is for our assurance and comfort, that it did pass. We have a Priest in heaven, who standeth continually pleading the merits of his sacrifice once offered upon the cross; "who ever liveth to make intercession for "us;" and who is ready, at all times, to bless us, "by turning away every man from his iniquities;" Acts iii. 26. by aiding us against our enemies, and supporting us under our necessities. Oblation, intercession, and benediction, are the three branches of the sacerdotal office, which our great High priest

now

now exerciſeth for us, and in the exerciſe of which the Father hath condeſcended in the moſt awful manner to promiſe, that he will hear and accept him on our behalf. His prieſthood is not, like that of Aaron, figurative, ſucceſſive, and tranſient, but real and effectual, fixed and incommunicable, eternal and unchangeable, according to that pattern of it exhibited to Abraham, before the law, in the perſon of "Melchizedek," Gen. xiv. 18—20. and diſcourſed upon at large by the Apoſtle, Heb. vii. throughout.

5. *The* LORD *upon thy right hand ſhall ſtrike through kings in the day of his wrath.* 6. *He ſhall judge among the heathen, he ſhall fill* the places *with the dead bodies; he ſhall wound the heads over many countries*; Heb. *the head over much country.*

This is a deſcription of the vengeance which King Meſſiah ſhould take on his impenitent adverſaries. By "The LORD, or, my LORD upon thy right "hand," אדני על ימינך the ſame perſon muſt undoubtedly be underſtood, who is mentioned in the firſt verſe under the ſame title, אדני as "ſitting at the "right hand of Jehovah." And the Pſalmiſt, who has hitherto addreſſed himſelf to Meſſiah, or the Son, muſt be ſuppoſed now to make a ſudden apoſtrophe to Jehovah, or the Father; as if he had ſaid, "This "my Lord Meſſiah, who ſitteth at thy right hand, "O Jehovah, ſhall ſmite through kings in the day "of his wrath;" the kings of the earth will endeavour to deſtroy his religion, and put an end to his kingdom; the Neros, the Domitians, the Dioclefians, the Maxentius's, the Julians, &c. &c. ſhall ſtand up, and ſet themſelves in array againſt him; but

but "the Lamb ſhall overcome them;" he ſhall "judge" and puniſh the "heathen" princes, with their people, when in arms againſt his church; he ſhall raiſe up thoſe who ſhall ſucceſsfully fight his battles, and ſtrew the ground with their "carcaſſes." As Meſſiah hath done to the antichriſtian powers of old, ſo ſhall he do to all others, before, or at his ſecond advent. There is a day of forbearance, during which he will have his church to be, like himſelf, oppreſſed and afflicted, humble and reſigned; but there is alſo a future day of wrath and recompence, when the ſins and provocations of her perſecutors ſhall be ripe for judgment; when their triumphs and her ſufferings ſhall be at an end; when they ſhall fall for ever, and ſhe ſhall aſcend to heaven.

7. *He ſhall drink of the brook*, or, *torrent, in the way: and therefore ſhall he lift up his head.*

The means, by which Chriſt ſhould obtain his univerſal kingdom, and everlaſting prieſthood, ſeem here to be aſſigned. In his "way" to glory, he was to drink deep of the *waters of affliction; the ſwollen "torrent" occurred in the way and preſented

* The Hebrew word נחל ſignifies, in general, "a current "of water," which may be either a turbid, overwhelming, "torrent," or a clear and gentle "ſtream." In Pſ. xviii. 5. it denotes the "floods of ungodlineſs;" in Pſ. xxxvi. 8. it is uſed to ſignify the "river of divine pleaſures." Hence ariſes an ambiguity in the interpretation of the words, "He ſhall drink of "the brook in the way," which may be expounded either of the "ſufferings" Chriſt taſted, or the "refreſhments" he experienced; as the "waters" are ſuppoſed to be thoſe of "affliction," or thoſe of "comfort." Either way, the ſenſe is good,

and

itſelf between him and the throne of God. To this "torrent in the way" the Saviour deſcended; he bowed himſelf down, and "drank" of it for us all; "and THEREFORE, על־כן did he lift up his head;" that is, he aroſe victorious, and from the valley, in which the torrent ran, aſcended to the ſummit of that holy and heavenly mount, where he reigneth, till "his enemies be made his footſtool." St. Paul hath expreſſed the ſame ſentiment in literal terms; "He humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto "death, even the death of the croſs: WHEREFORE, "διο, God alſo hath highly exalted him." Phil. ii. 8.

PSALM CXI.

ARGUMENT.

This is one of the Proper Pſalms appointed by the church to be read on Eaſter Day. It containeth 1. a reſolution to praiſe Jehovah in the congregation, 2, 3. for his great and glorious works, and 4. for the appointed

and true, as it relates to Meſſiah. "Torrents," or the "over-"flowing of rivers," in the Scripture language, certainly, as Dr. Durell obſerves, do often denote "afflictions;" as in. Pſ. xviii. 4. cxxiv. 4, 5, cxliv. 7, &c. "the being oppreſſed by "them," is alſo deſcribed by the action of "drinking," Pſ. lx. 3. lxxv. 8, &c. And the idea of a "brook in the WAY, or the "ROAD," ſeems to favour this expoſition. But the author advances it, as becomes him to do, with great deference and ſubmiſſion, ſince Biſhop Lowth and Mr. Merrick are of a different opinion.

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memorials of them: 5, 6. his mercies to the church are celebrated, and 7, 8. the equity and the ſtability of his counſels declared; 9. the bleſſings of Redemption, and the new covenant, are mentioned, as they were prefigured of old in God's diſpenſations toward Iſrael. 10. Religion is proclaimed to be true wiſdom.

1. *I will praiſe the* LORD *with my whole heart, in the aſſembly of the upright, and in the congregation.*

Jehovah is to be "praiſed," not only with the voice, and the underſtanding, but with the "heart," with the "whole" heart, and all it's affections, tuned, like the chords of the ſon of Jeſſe's harp, to a ſong of gratitude and love. Solitary devotion hath, doubtleſs, it's beauties and excellencies; but how glorious is it to hear the voices of a whole Chriſtian "congregation" break forth into Halleluiahs, like the ſound of many waters, and the noiſe of mighty thunderings, while each one, as it were, provokes another to continue the bleſſed employment, with unremitted attention, and unabated fervor.

2. *The works of the* LORD *are great, ſought out of all them that have pleaſure therein.*

The ſubjects of man's praiſe are the "works" of God. Every one of theſe works, whether in the natural or the ſpiritual ſyſtem, is "great." Nothing cometh from the hands of the divine artiſt, but what is excellent and perfect in it's kind, adapted with infinite ſkill to it's proper place, and fitted for it's intended

intended uſe. Happy are they, who with humility and diligence, with faith and devotion, give themſelves to the contemplation of theſe works, and take "pleaſure" and delight therein. To them ſhall the gate of true ſcience open; they ſhall underſtand the myſteries of Creation, Providence, and Redemption; and they who thus "ſeek," ſhall find the treaſures of eternal wiſdom.

3. *His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteouſneſs endureth for ever.*

The "work," of all others, in which the "honour "and glorious majeſty" of Jehovah appeared, and which the Chriſtian church celebrates with this Pſalm, is the ſalvation and exaltation of our nature, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead; an event, which contained in it the accompliſhment of the ancient promiſes, and thereby demonſtrated to all the world the everlaſting truth, fidelity, and "righte-"ouſneſs" of him who made them.

4. *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered:* or, *he hath appointed a memorial for his wonders; the* LORD *is gracious and full of compaſſion.*

Jewiſh feaſts were "memorials" of the "wonders" wrought for Iſrael of old; Chriſtian feſtivals are "memorials" of the "wonders" wrought in Chriſt for all mankind, to whom, no leſs than to Iſrael, God hath now ſhewed himſelf "gracious and full of "compaſſion."

5. *He hath given meat to them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.* 6. *He hath ſhewed his people the power of his works, that he may,* or, *might give them the heritage of the heathen.*

Agreeably to the "covenant" which God made with Abraham, as concerning his children according to the fleſh, he "fed" and ſupported them in the wilderneſs, he overthrew their enemies by the might of his "power," and he put them in poſſeſſion of Canaan, which before was "the heritage of the hea-"then." Agreeably to the covenant which God made with the ſame Abraham, as concerning all believers, thoſe "children of the promiſe which are "counted for the ſeed," he feedeth them in the world with the true * manna, the bread which cometh down from heaven; he hath again "ſhewed the "power of his works" in the overthrow of idolatry; and again, by the converſion of the nations, given to his church "the heritage of the heathen;" although, like Iſrael, ſhe is commanded, and hath had frequent admonitions, not to fix her heart on an earthly Canaan; not to expect any permanent habitation, any enduring city here below; not to ſtop ſhort of an eternal and heavenly Reſt.

7. *The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are ſure.* 8. *They ſtand faſt for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightneſs.*

In all God's diſpenſations towards his faithful ſervants, and towards his impenitent adverſaries, we admire and adore his "verity" in the performance of his promiſes to the former, and his "juſtice" in executing his vengeance on the latter. Thus the time of

* "Eſcam dedit" — Manna: quæ cætera Dei mirabilia in memoriam revocabat: unde in Arcâ ſervari juſſa. Exod. xvi. 32. Erat autem Euchariſtiæ figura, quæ verè divini amoris monumentum æternum. BOSSUET.

fulfilling

fulfilling his promiſe to Abraham came not till the iniquity of the Amorites was full. The caſe is the ſame as to the coming of Chriſt, the ſubverſion of paganiſm, the deaths of perſecutors, the riſe and fall of nations, the converſion or exciſion of individuals, and every other inſtance of mercy or judgment. Another property of God's works is, that, being "done in truth and uprightneſs, they ſtand faſt for "ever;" and will then appear in perfect glory and beauty, when all the arts and labours of man ſhall be no more.

9. *He ſent redemption unto his people, he hath commanded his covenant for ever; holy and reverend*, or, *terrible is his name.*

He who "ſent redemption" to Iſrael by the hand of Moſes, hath now "ſent redemption" by the power of Jeſus, to all the world: he who, at mount Sinai, eſtabliſhed his "covenant" with his people, and gave them a law, hath now eſtabliſhed his "co-"venant" with the Gentiles, and publiſhed to them his Goſpel from Sion. "Holy is his name," and therefore "terrible" to thoſe who, under all the means of grace, continue unholy.

10. *The fear of the* LORD, *is the beginning of wiſdom: a good underſtanding have all they that do his* commandments: *his praiſe endureth for ever.*

The "fear of God" is the firſt ſtep to ſalvation, as it exciteth a ſinner to depart from evil, and to do good; to implore pardon, and to ſue for grace; to apply to a Saviour for the one, and to a Sanctifier for the other. Religion is the perfection of wiſdom, practice the beſt inſtructor, and thankſgiving the ſweeteſt recreation.

PSALM CXII.

ARGUMENT.

The Pſalmiſt enumerateth the bleſſings attending the man who feareth Jehovah; 1. the pleaſure which he taketh in doing his will; 2. the proſperity of his ſeed; 3. the plenteouſneſs in his houſe; 4. his comfort in trouble; 5. his internal joys; 6. the honour with which he is remembered; 7, 8. his holy confidence in God; 9. his good deeds, and the reward of them; 10. the envy, wretchedneſs, and perdition of the wicked. The bleſſings of the Goſpel are ſpiritual and eternal; and they are conferred upon the members of the Chriſtian church through Chriſt their head, who is the pattern of all righteouſneſs, and the giver of all grace.

1. *Bleſſed is the man* that *feareth the* Lord, that *delighteth greatly in his commandments*; or, *he delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

The man who duly "feareth God," is delivered from every other fear; the man who "delighteth in "God's commandments," is freed from every inordinate deſire of earthly things; and ſuch a man muſt needs be "bleſſed." Of this kind was thy bleſſedneſs, O holy Jeſu, on whom did reſt "the Spirit of "know-

"knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah," and whoſe "meat" it was "to do the will of him that "ſent thee, and to finiſh his work." Iſai. xi. 2. John iv. 34.

2. *His ſeed ſhall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright ſhall be bleſſed.*

A father's piety derives the benediction of heaven upon his children. The poſterity of faithful Abraham were often ſpared and favoured on account of their progenitor; as the whole family of believers, Abraham and all, are bleſſed in Him, who is the great father of that family, and the author of their ſalvation.

3. *Wealth and riches* ſhall be *in his houſe: and his righteouſneſs endureth for ever.*

It ſometimes pleaſeth God to beſtow on his ſervants, as he did on Iſrael of old, the good things of this world. And a rich man is therefore happier than a poor man, becauſe "it is more bleſſed to give than "to receive." Acts xx. 35. But the true "wealth" of Chriſtians is of another kind; their "riches" are ſuch as neither moth can corrupt, nor thief ſteal. Grace and glory are in the "houſe" of Chriſt, and everlaſting "righteouſneſs" is the portion of his children.

4. *Unto the upright there ariſeth light in the darkneſs*; he is *gracious, and full of compaſſion, and righteous.*

While we are on earth, we are ſubject to a threefold "darkneſs;" the darkneſs of error, the darkneſs of ſorrow, and the darkneſs of death. To diſpel theſe, God viſiteth us, by his Word, with a three-

fold "light;" the light of truth, the light of comfort, and the light of life. The Chriſtian's temper is framed after the pattern of his Maſter; and he is ever ready to ſhew to others that "love" and "mercy" which have been ſhewn to him.

5. *A good man ſheweth favour and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with diſcretion.*

The former part of this verſe may be rendered, with a little variation, "It is well with the man who "is gracious and communicative;" ill nature and avarice are their own tormentors, but love and liberality do good to themſelves by doing it to others, and enjoy all the happineſs which they cauſe. It is not God's intention, that any of the talents which he beſtoweth upon us ſhould lie dead, but that our brethren ſhould have the uſe of them; even as Chriſt received the Spirit to communicate it to us, and our ſalvation is his glory and joy. The latter part of this verſe is likewiſe capable of a different, and, indeed, a more literal tranſlation; "He will ſupport, "or, maintain his words, or, his tranſactions in "judgment;" that is, he who thus employed his talents for the benefit of mankind, will be able to render a good account to his Lord who intruſteth them with him.

6. *Surely he ſhall not be moved for ever: the righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance.* 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, truſting in the* LORD. 8. *His heart is eſtabliſhed, he ſhall not be afraid, until he ſee* his deſire *upon his enemies.*

Nothing can deprive the perſon here deſcribed of his felicity. When his work is done, his body will

go

go to it's repoſe in the duſt, but the "memorial" of his name and of his good deeds will be ſtill freſh as the morning breeze, and fragrant as the flower of the ſpring. "He feareth no evil report;" no blaſt of ſlander and malice can touch him; no tidings of calamity and deſtruction can ſhake his confidence in God; but he will hear the trump of judgment, and behold the world in flames, rather with joy than with dread; as knowing, by thoſe tokens, that the hour of his redemption is come, when "he ſhall ſee his "enemies," and even death, the laſt of them, under his feet.

9. *He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor, his righteouſneſs endureth for ever; his horn ſhall be exalted with honour.*

His riches are not hoarded up, but "diſperſed" abroad; and that not by others after his death, but by himſelf in his life time; "He hath diſperſed." They are not ſquandered in the ways of vanity and folly, but "given to the poor;" nor are they given indiſcriminately and at random, but "diſperſed," like precious ſeed with prudence and diſcretion, according to the nature of the ſoil, and in proper ſeaſon, ſo as to produce the moſt plentiful harveſt. Therefore "his righteouſneſs endureth for ever;" it's fruits and it's good report are laſting among men, and it is never forgotten before God, who hath prepared for it an eternal reward. "His horn ſhall be "exalted with honour, or, in glory;" whatever may be his lot upon earth, and even there the charitable man will frequently be had in "honour," at the laſt day, certainly, when the thrones of the mighty ſhall

be caſt down, and the ſceptres of tyrants broken in pieces, then ſhall he lift up his head, and be exalted to partake of the "glory" of his Redeemer, the author of his faith, and the pattern of his charity, who gave himſelf for us, and is now ſeated at the right hand of the majeſty in the heavens.

10. *The wicked ſhall ſee it, and be grieved; he ſhall gnaſh with his teeth, and melt away; the deſire of the wicked ſhall periſh.*

The ſight of Chriſt in glory, with his ſaints, will, in an inexpreſſible manner, torment the crucifiers of the one, and the perſecutors of the others; as it will ſhew them the hopes and wiſhes of their adverſaries all granted to the full, and all their own "deſires" and deſigns for ever at an end; it will excite an envy which muſt prey upon itſelf, produce a grief which can admit of no comfort, give birth to a worm which can never die, and blow up thoſe fires which nothing can quench.

PSALM CXIII.

ARGUMENT.

The ſervants of God are 1. exhorted to praiſe his name, 2. at all times, and 3. in all places, on account 4, 5. of his power and glory, 6—8. of his mercy in redeeming man, and 9. making the Gentile church to be a joyful mother of children. This Pſalm is appointed to be read on Eaſter-Day.

1. *Praiſe*

1. *Praiſe, O ye ſervants of the* LORD, *praiſe the name of the* LORD. 2. *Bleſſed be the name of the* LORD, *from this time forth, and for evermore.*

Chriſtians are the "ſervants" of Jeſus Chriſt; and a moſt delightful part of their ſervice it is to "praiſe" his holy and ſaving "name" in the church, which now uſeth this Pſalm among others, and with it "bleſſeth the name" of her Lord and Saviour, from age to age. The Pſalmiſt wiſhed and prayed that this might be done, and he foreſaw that it would be done, while the world ſhould laſt, upon earth, and afterwards "for evermore," in heaven.

3. *From the riſing of the ſun unto the going down of the ſame, the* LORD'S *name is to be praiſed*; or, *is praiſed.* 4. *The* LORD *is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.*

At the diffuſion of the Goſpel through the world, the name of Chriſt was praiſed "from the eaſt to the "weſt," in churches every where planted by the Apoſtles and their ſucceſſors: and the grand ſubjects of joy and triumph among believers were, the ſuperiority of their Maſter over the "heathen nations," and their idols; the exaltation of "his glory above "the heavens," and all the powers therein: the might of his arm and the majeſty of his kingdom.

5. *Who is like unto the* LORD *our God, who dwelleth on high!* 6. *Who humbleth* himſelf *to behold* the things that are *in heaven and in earth.*

Highly as our Lord is exalted above this ſyſtem, above theſe heavens and this earth of ours, yet he condeſcendeth to regard every thing that paſſeth here, and to make us, the inhabitants of this lower world,

and,

and, for our ſakes, all the other creatures in it, the objects of his peculiar care, and paternal love.

7. *He raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill*; 8. *That he may ſet* him *with princes*, even *with the princes of his people.*

Such is his mercy to the poor ſons of Adam in their fallen eſtate, that from the loweſt and moſt abject condition, from the pollutions of ſin, and from the diſhonours of the grave, he raiſeth them to righteouſneſs and holineſs, to glory and immortality; he ſetteth them on high, with the inhabitants of the heavenly Jeruſalem, "with the princes of his peo-"ple," the leaders of the armies above, with angels and archangels before his throne. What is the exaltation of the meaneſt beggar from a dunghill to an earthly diadem, when compared with that of human nature from the grave to the throne of God! Here is honour worthy our ambition; honour, after which, all are alike invited to aſpire: which all may obtain, who ſtrive worthily and lawfully; and of which, when once obtained, nothing can ever deprive the poſſeſſors.

9. *He maketh the barren woman to keep houſe*, and to be *a joyful mother of children. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

In the ſacred hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, we meet with frequent inſtances of barren women, who were miraculouſly made to bear children. Iſaac, Joſeph, Samſon, and Samuel, were thus born of Sarah, Rachel, the wife of Manoah, and Hannah. To theſe may be added, from the hiſtory of the New Teſtament, the inſtance of Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, and mother of St. John the Baptiſt. Theſe examples

amples may be conſidered as preludes to that marvellous exertion of divine power, whereby the Gentile Church, after ſo many years of barrenneſs, became, in her old age, "a fruitful parent of children, and "the mother of us all." Wherefore it is written, "Sing, O barren, thou that didſt not bear; break "forth into ſinging, and cry aloud, thou that didſt "not travail with child: for more are the children "of the deſolate, than the children of the married "wife, ſaith the LORD." Iſa. liv. 1. Gal. iv. 27.

XXIII DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXIV.

ARGUMENT.

This is another of the Pſalms appointed by our church to be read on Eaſter-Day. It celebrates the Exodus of Iſrael from Egypt, and the miracles wrought for that people, prefiguring the Redemption of our nature from ſin and death, and the wonders of mercy and love wrought for us by Jeſus Chriſt.

1. *When Iſrael went out of Egypt, the houſe of Jacob from a people of ſtrange language*; 2. *Judah was his*, that is, *God's ſanctuary, and Iſrael his dominion.*

When Jehovah delivered Iſrael from the bondage of Egypt, he choſe them for his peculiar people; his preſence reſided in their camp, as in a "ſanc-

"tuary,"

"tuary," or temple; and he ruled them, as an earthly king exerciſeth ſovereignty in his "domini-"ons." This world, and the prince of this world, are to us, what Egypt and Pharaoh were to Iſrael. The redemption of our nature, by the reſurrection of Chriſt, anſwereth to their redemption by the hand of Moſes. When we are baptiſed into the death and reſurrection of our Lord, we renounce the world, it's pomps and vanities; and ſhould, therefore, quit it's corrupt "language," manners, and cuſtoms, with as much alacrity and expedition, as "the family of Jacob" left thoſe of Egypt. We are the "ſanctuary, the temple," in which Chriſt dwelleth by his Spirit; we are the ſubjects of his ſpiritual "kingdom;" we are his peculiar people; in one word, we are his "Church," and ſucceed, as ſuch, to all the titles and privileges formerly conferred on Iſrael.

3. *The ſea ſaw it and fled; Jordan was driven back.* Although forty years intervened between the two events here mentioned, yet, as the miracles were of a ſimilar nature, they are ſpoken of together. In the paſſage of Iſrael through the red ſea we may contemplate our paſſage from a death of ſin to a life of righteouſneſs, through the waters of baptiſm; as our tranſlation from Death temporal to life eternal is figured by their entrance into the promiſed land, through the river Jordan. The waters in both caſes are poetically repreſented as ſenſible of their Creator's preſence; and by their retiring and opening a path for the people of God, we are taught, that if we con-

continue faithful, all obſtructions will be removed in our way to heaven.

4. *The mountains ſkipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.*

The tremors of mount Sinai and the neighbouring hills, when the law was given, afforded ſome ſpecimen of that power which was afterwards exerted in the overthrow of idolatry, and the caſting down of every high thing, that exalted itſelf againſt the Goſpel at it's publication. "See, therefore, that ye re-"fuſe not him that ſpeaketh: for if they eſcaped "not, who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much "more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from "him that ſpeaketh from heaven; whoſe voice then "ſhook the earth: but now he hath promiſed, ſay-"ing, Yet once more I ſhake not the earth only, "but alſo heaven." Heb. xii. 25.

5. *What* ailed *thee, O thou ſea, that thou fleddeſt? Thou, Jordan, that thou waſt driven back?* 6. *Ye mountains*, that *ye ſkipped like rams*; and *ye little hills like lambs?* 7. *Tremble thou earth at the preſence of the* LORD, *at the preſence of the God of Jacob.*

If the divine preſence hath ſuch an effect upon inanimate matter, how ought it to operate on rational and accountable beings? Let us be afraid, with an holy fear, at the preſence of God, in the world by his Providence, and by his Spirit in our conſciences; ſo that we may have hope and courage in the day when he ſhall ariſe to ſhake terribly the earth; when "every iſland ſhall fly away, and the mountains "ſhall be no more found." Rev. xvi. 20.

8. *Which*

8. *Which turned the rock into a ſtanding water, the flint into a fountain of waters.*

He who brought water out of the ſacramental rock in the wilderneſs, hath ſince cauſed rivers of living water to flow through the world, from the Rock of our ſalvation; nay, he hath diſſolved the ſtony hearts of ſinners, and made to ſpring up in them fountains of this water of life. For theſe great inſtances of his power and his love, we are taught to bleſs his holy name, when we ſing this Pſalm, as an evangelical hymn, on the day of our Lord's reſurrection.

PSALM CXV.

ARGUMENT.

The church 1, 2. prayeth that God would glorify himſelf in her ſalvation; 3. ſhe declareth her faith in him; 4—8. expoſeth the vanity and folly of idolatry; 9—11. exhorteth her children to rely upon Jehovah; 12—15. foretelleth how he will bleſs, proſper, and increaſe his people, 16—18. never ſuffering the voice of praiſe and thankſgiving to ceaſe upon the earth.

1. *Not unto us, O* LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's ſake.* 2. *Wherefore ſhould the heathen ſay, Where is now their God?*

From

From theſe two verſes it is evident, that the Pſalm is not a thankſgiving for victory, but a petition for deliverance. God is intreated to "give glory," by ſuch deliverance, "not to us," to our works, or endeavours, but "to his own name;" he is requeſted to vouchſafe ſalvation, not on account of our merits, but of his "mercy," which inclineth him to be gracious; of his "truth," which diſpoſeth him to fulfil his promiſes; and of his "honour," that the enemy may not have occaſion to blaſpheme him, and reproach his ſervants, as if their Maſter either could not, or would not help them, in the day of their diſtreſs. "Wherefore ſhould the heathen ſay, Where "is now their God?"

3. *But our God* is *in the heavens, he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed*; or, *he doeth whatſoever he pleaſeth.*

Should the inſulting adverſary aſk the above queſtion, "Where is now their God;" the faithful are ready with their reply, "Our God is in the hea-"vens;" he is, where he ever was, upon his glorious throne, high over all the kingdoms of the world, and the powers of created nature; from thence he obſerveth and ordereth all things here below; what we ſuffer is by his appointment; and, at his good time and pleaſure, he both can and will relieve us: "he doeth whatſoever he pleaſeth."

4. *Their idols are ſilver and gold, the work of mens hands.* 5. *They have mouths, but they ſpeak not; eyes have they, but they ſee not.* 6. *They have ears, but they hear not; noſes have they, but they ſmell not.* 7. *They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not; neither ſpeak they through their throat.*

A beau-

A beautiful contraſt is formed between the God of Iſrael and the heathen idols. He made every thing, they are themſelves made by men; he is in heaven, they are upon earth; he doeth whatſoever he pleaſeth, they can do nothing; he ſeeth the diſtreſſes, heareth and anſwereth the prayers, accepteth the offerings, cometh to the aſſiſtance, and effecteth the ſalvation of his ſervants; they are blind, deaf, and dumb, ſenſeleſs, motionleſs, and impotent. Equally ſlow to hear, equally impotent to ſave, in time of greateſt need, will every worldly idol prove, on which men have ſet their affections, and to which they have, in effect, ſaid, "Thou art my God."

8. *They that make them are like unto them*; ſo is *every one that truſteth in them.*

Idolaters, like the objects of their worſhip, are rather lifeleſs images, than real men. What our Lord ſaid of the Jews, is applicable to them, and indeed to all who reject the knowledge of the true God, and the doctrines of ſalvation; "Having eyes "they ſee not, having ears they hear not." They ſee not the things which belong unto their peace: they hear not the word of inſtruction and exhortation; they ſpeak not of religion and the kingdom of heaven; they work not the works of piety and charity; they walk not in the path of the divine commandments; they are ſpiritually blind, deaf, dumb, lame, and impotent; and when their idols are deſtroyed, they will periſh in like manner.

9. *O Iſrael, truſt thou in the* LORD; *he is their help and their ſhield.* 10. *O houſe of Aaron, truſt in the* LORD:

LORD: *he* is *their help and their ſhield.* 11. *Ye that fear the* LORD, *truſt in the* LORD: *he* is *their help and their ſhield.*

Let the men of the world make to themſelves gods, and vainly truſt in the work of their own hands, or heads; but let the church repoſe all her confidence in Jehovah, her Saviour and Redeemer, who alone can be her defender and protector; more eſpecially let her miniſters, the ſons of the true Aaron, do this, who are the peculiar portion of their God, employed continually in his ſervice, and deſigned to build up others in faith and hope; and let all who have been inſtructed, by their miniſtry, in the fear of the Lord, truſt always in him, nor ſuffer any apprehenſion of danger or diſtreſs to ſeparate them from him.

12. *The* LORD *hath been*, or, *is mindful of us, he will bleſs us, he will bleſs the houſe of Iſrael, he will bleſs the houſe of Aaron.* 13. *He will bleſs them that fear the* LORD, *both ſmall and great.* 14. *The* LORD *ſhall increaſe you more and more, you and your children.* 15. *You are bleſſed of the* LORD, *which made heaven and earth.*

The heart of the Pſalmiſt is full of "bleſſing," and on his tongue is the word of kindneſs and comfort. The "bleſſings" formerly confined to Iſrael, have ſince been extended to the whole race of mankind. Jehovah, ever "mindful" of his creatures, hath viſited the world by his Son, and by his Spirit; he hath formed a church from among the Gentiles, appointed a prieſthood and miniſtry in it, and given

his benediction to both; he hath "bleſſed," with the bleſſings of grace, "them that fear him," of all nations, and of every degree; he hath "increaſed" and multiplied his people exceedingly; and the faithful members of the Chriſtian church are now "the "bleſſed of Jehovah, who made heaven and earth," and who is, conſequently, poſſeſſed of all power in both.

16. *The heaven*, even *the heavens*, or, *the heavens of heavens are the* LORD'S; *but the earth hath he given to the children of men.* 17. *The dead praiſe not the* LORD, *neither any that go down into ſilence.* 18. *But we will bleſs the* LORD, *from this time forth and for evermore. Praiſe the* LORD.

He who himſelf dwelleth in the higheſt heavens, where he is praiſed and glorified by angels, hath "given the earth" for an habitation, at preſent, "to "the ſons of men," whoſe duty it is to praiſe and glorify him here below, as the angels do above. Now as "the dead cannot praiſe him," as they who ſleep in the ſilent grave cannot celebrate him, we may be certain, that he will not ſuffer his people to be deſtroyed and extirpated, but will always preſerve a church to "bleſs him" in all ages, till the end of the world; when the dead ſhall be raiſed, and the choirs of heaven and earth ſhall be united, to praiſe and glorify him together before his throne, for evermore.

XXIV DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXVI.

ARGUMENT.

It is not certain by whom, or upon what occaſion this Pſalm was compoſed. It plainly appears, however, to be a ſong of thankſgiving for deliverance from trouble, either temporal, or ſpiritual, or both. To render it of general uſe, let it be conſidered as an evangelical hymn, in the mouth of a penitent, expreſſing his gratitude for ſalvation from ſin and death. 1, 2. He declareth his love of God, who hath vouchſafed to hear his prayer; 3—9. deſcribeth his diſtreſs, his deliverance out of it, and ſubſequent peace and comfort; 10, 11. he acknowledgeth himſelf to have been tempted to deſpond, but was ſupported by faith, in the day of trouble; 12—19. he determineth to receive the cup of ſalvation, to praiſe and to ſerve Jehovah, who thus delivereth the ſouls of his people.

1. *I love the* LORD, *becauſe he hath heard my voice,* and *my ſupplications.* 2. *Becauſe he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon* him *as long as I live.*

In the original it is, "I love, * becauſe Jehovah "hath heard, &c." The ſoul, tranſported with gratitude and love, ſeems at firſt to expreſs her affection without declaring it's object, as thinking that all the world muſt know who is the perſon intended. Thus Mary Magdalen, in her converſation, at the ſepulchre, with one whom ſhe ſuppoſed to have been the gardener, though no previous mention had been made of Jeſus, ſaith, "Sir, if thou have borne HIM "hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I "will take him away." John xx. 15. And ought not the love of God to be excited in all our hearts by the conſideration, that when we were not able to raiſe ourſelves up to him, he mercifully and tenderly "inclined" and bowed down "his ear" to us; he "heard our ſupplications," and deſcended from heaven to help and deliver us. With hope, therefore, and confidence ſhould we "call upon him," in all our troubles, "as long as we live."

3. *The ſorrows of death compaſſed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and ſorrow.* 4. *Then called I upon the name of the* LORD; *O* LORD, *I beſeech thee deliver my ſoul.*

Theſe "ſorrows," or "bands of death," once "compaſſed" the human race; theſe "pains of hell" were ready to ſeize on every ſon of Adam. The awakened and terrified conſcience of a ſinner hath felt the oppreſſion of the former, and experienced ſome foretaſte of the latter. In this ſituation he is deſcribed by St. Paul as crying out, "O wretched

* Some critics prefer our old verſion,—"I am well pleaſed."

"man

"man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this "body of death!" Let him take the courſe which the Pſalmiſt took; let him "call upon the name of "the Lord," even the Lord Jeſus, who put himſelf in the ſinners place, and ſuffered for him unſpeakable "ſorrows and pains;" let him do this, and he ſhall be ſaved; and ſhall ſing the praiſes of his almighty Saviour, in the words of this beautiful Pſalm.

5. *Gracious is the* LORD, *and righteous: yea, our God is merciful.* 6. *The* LORD *preſerveth the ſimple: I was brought low, and he helped me.*

In the ſalvation of a ſinner we contemplate God's "grace," by which the work is effected; his "righte-"ouſneſs," which cauſeth him to perform what he hath promiſed through Chriſt; his "mercy," which induced him to ſend his Son, and to make the promiſe. This mercy is the mercy of a parent, and ſuch as a parent ſheweth to thoſe young and "ſimple" ones, who have been overreached and deceived by a crafty adverſary; to thoſe who fall, and are unable of themſelves to riſe again; "I was brought low, and "he helped me."

7. *Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul, for the* LORD *hath dealt bountifully with thee.* 8. *For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.* 9. *I will walk before the* LORD *in the land of the living.*

That peace of conſcience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, which the penitent experienceth, as the effect and fruit of pardon, afford him ſome idea of the reſt and felicity of heaven; and, accordingly, he ſpeaks

as one tranſlated to thoſe happy manſions, where there is no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, becauſe there is no more ſin. A Chriſtian, delivered out of the miſeries of this troubleſome world, and at reſt in Abraham's boſom, would expreſs himſelf, as one ſhould think, in theſe very terms. Remiſſion of ſins ought to be followed by newneſs of life, and the reſolution of him, whoſe "ſoul" hath been "de-"livered from death, his eyes from tears, and his "feet from falling," ſhould always be this, "I will "walk before the LORD," as one under his inſpection, "in the land of the living," or amongſt the redeemed in the church; until the time come for me to depart hence, and to be numbered with the ſaints, in glory everlaſting.

10. *I believed, therefore have I ſpoken; I was greatly afflicted:* 11. *I ſaid in my haſte, all men are liars.*

In afflictions and diſtreſſes, thoſe of the ſpirit and conſcience more eſpecially, the ſoul is tempted to deſpond, and can only be ſupported by faith exerting itſelf in prayer; "I believed and therefore have "I ſpoken, or, therefore ſpake I," that is, as above, verſe 4, "I called upon the name of the Lord, O "Lord I beſeech thee, deliver my ſoul." And this I did, though ſo "greatly afflicted," that I had "ſaid in my haſte," in my hurry and trepidation, occaſioned by fear and amazement, "all men are "liars;" there is no credit to be given to their promiſes of deliverance; I am loſt and undone for ever. Yet my faith failed not entirely, and lo, my prayer hath been heard, and anſwered. St. Paul, relating the troubles which came upon him, and the manner

in

in which he ſuſtained them, thus citeth a part of the 10th verſe; "We, having the ſame ſpirit of faith, "according as it is written, I believed, and therefore "have I ſpoken: we alſo believe, and therefore "ſpeak; knowing that he, which raiſed up the "Lord Jeſus, ſhall raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus, and "ſhall preſent us with you." 2 Cor. iv. 13, 14.

12. *What ſhall I render unto the* LORD, *for all his benefits towards me?* 13. *I will take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the* LORD. 14. *I will pay my vows unto the* LORD *now in the preſence of all his people.*

The grateful penitent now aſketh, what return he ſhall make to his kind Benefactor, for the moſt valuable of all bleſſings conferred upon him? And he preſently reſolveth to make the only return in his power, namely, to acknowledge and declare before men, the goodneſs of Jehovah, aſcribing all the glory where it is all due. This he determineth to do, by "taking "the cup of ſalvation," which, as Dr. Hammond obſerves, among the Jews, was twofold; one offered in a more ſolemn manner in the temple; Numb. xxviii. 7. the other more private in families, called the cup of thankſgiving, or commemoration of any deliverance; begun by the Maſter of the family, and attended, on feſtival days, with a ſuitable hymn; ſuch as was that ſung by our Lord and his diſciples, on the night when he advanced that cup into the ſacrament of his blood, which hath ever ſince been to Chriſtians "the cup of ſalvation," and which all penitents ſhould now receive in the church, with invo-

cation, thankſgiving, and payment of the "vows," made in time of trouble.

15. *Precious in the ſight of the* LORD *is the death of his ſaints.*

The notion of the original word יקר in this place, for "rare, or precious," muſt be ſo taken, as not to ſignify that which is ſpoken of to be "deſirable to, "or in the preſence of the Lord;" for it is the "life," not the "death" of his ſervants, which is precious, in that ſenſe, to God, the preſerver of their lives. But when it is ſaid, that their "death is pre-"cious," it means in effect no more, than that it is ſo conſidered, it is rated at "ſo high a price" by God, as that he will not eaſily grant it to any one who moſt deſires it of him.—Thus far Dr. Hammond. We may add, that much leſs will God be eaſily prevailed on to give up his people to death eternal. Rather will he work wonders of mercy and loving kindneſs to ſave them; as the penitent happily experienceth in himſelf.

16. *O* LORD, *truly I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant,* and *the ſon of thy handmaid; thou haſt looſed my bonds.* 17. *I will offer to thee the ſacrifice of thankſgiving, and will call upon the name of the* LORD. 18. *I will pay my vows unto the* LORD *now in the preſence of all his people.* 19. *In the courts of the* LORD'S *houſe, in the midſt of thee, O Jeruſalem. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

Every penitent is the "ſervant" of God, "the "ſon of his handmaid," the church, "looſed from "his bonds," and redeemed from a ſtate of ſlavery under

under ſin, the world, and the devil, that he may ſerve a better Maſter, whoſe "yoke is eaſy, and his "burden light." This bleſſed Maſter is from thenceforth the object of his love, duty, and adoration: to him he "offereth the ſacrifice of thankſgiving," to him he "payeth his vows," among his fellow-ſervants, in the church on earth; longing for that day to come, when, looſed alſo from the bands of death and the grave, he ſhall be admitted to ſing Hallelujahs, with ſaints and angels, in the "courts" of the eternal temple, even "in the midſt of thee, O "Jeruſalem," the holy, heavenly, and glorious city of God moſt High!

PSALM CXVII.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm, like the cxth, ſeems to be altogether prophetical of the joy that all the world ſhould conceive, at the coming of the Meſſiah, to give ſalvation, firſt to the Jews, and then to all other nations, according to his faithful promiſe. PATRICK.

1. *O praiſe the* LORD, *all ye nations: praiſe him all ye people.* 2. *For his merciful kindneſs is great towards us: and the truth of the* LORD endureth *for ever. Praiſe the* LORD.

It is remarkable, that of ſo ſhort a Pſalm one verſe is quoted in the New Teſtament by St. Paul; the ſecond verſe is explained, though not quoted.

Two

Two queſtions naturally ariſe, upon reading the Pſalm; firſt, who are the "nations and people," exhorted to praiſe Jehovah; ſecondly, what is that "merciful kindneſs," and that "truth," for which they are exhorted to praiſe him. The Apoſtle hath given a ſatisfactory and deciſive anſwer to both theſe queſtions, Rom. xv. 8, 9, &c. "Now I ſay, that "Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion for "the TRUTH of God, to confirm the promiſes made "unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glo-"rify God for his MERCY; as it is written, Praiſe "the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye "people." From the Apoſtle's reaſoning, the verſe of our Pſalm, which he hath cited, appears to be a proof, that "the Gentiles," or the heathen world, ſhould one day "glorify God;" they are, therefore, the "people," whom the Pſalmiſt, in the Spirit of prophecy, exhorteth to "praiſe Jehovah." It appears alſo, why the Gentiles were to glorify God; namely, for his "mercy" and "truth," ſhewn in confirming, or accompliſhing the "promiſes," concerning their vocation and converſion, "made unto "the fathers*;" to Abraham, and his ſeed for ever; to all believers, whether of the circumciſion, or the uncircumciſion. Such, then, is the "merciful kind-"neſs" of Jehovah, which is ſaid, in the Pſalm, to

* "Confirmata—et veritas Domini"—Promiſerat enim Abrahamo Deus futurum, ut per Chriſtum, benedictum illud Abrahami ſemen, benedicerentur omnes Gentes, Gen. xii. 3. xv. 18. interprete Apoſtolo, Gal. iii. 16. Quod cum præſtitum videamus, jam intelligimus verè adveniſſe Chriſtum, ac promiſſa Dei firma eſſe omnia. BOSSUET.

be "great," mighty, and powerful "towards us;" ſuch his "truth," which is affirmed to "endure for "ever;" as the promiſes were made good to the Gentiles, when the Jews, becauſe of unbelief, had been caſt off. Let the hallelujahs of the redeemed be ſuitable to that "mercy," and co-eternal with that "truth."

PSALM CXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, a King of Iſrael appears leading his People in ſolemn proceſſion to the temple, there to offer up the ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving, for a marvellous deliverance from his enemies, and a glorious victory, gained over them. After inviting the whole nation, 1—4. to join with him, upon this joyful occaſion, he deſcribeth at large, 5—18. his danger, and his deliverance from it, which latter is wholly attributed to the power and goodneſs of Jehovah. After this, as Mr. Mudge has rightly obſerved, there enſues a kind of ſacred dialogue. Being come to the temple, the victorious monarch ſpeaks the 19th verſe; they that open the gate, the 20th; he again, as he enters, the 21ſt; they with him ſeem to ſpeak the four next verſes to the 25th; the

the prieſts of the temple, the 26th; the firſt part to the King, the other to the people; the people the 27th; he the 28th; the 29th is the chorus verſe, concluding as it began. The repeated application made of the 22d verſe in the New Teſtament, and the appointments of the Pſalm, by the church, to be uſed on Eaſter Day, lead us to conſider the whole as a triumphant Hymn, ſung by King Meſſiah, at the head of the Iſrael of God, on occaſion of his reſurrection and exaltation.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for* he is *good: becauſe his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 2. *Let Iſrael now ſay, that his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 3. *Let the houſe of Aaron now ſay, that his mercy* endureth *for ever. Let them now that fear the* LORD, *ſay, that his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

The ſubjects of "thankſgiving" here propoſed are Jehovah's "goodneſs" and his "mercy." He is the ſole fountain of abſolute and eſſential "goodneſs," the ſource of all excellency and perfection; and his "mercy" is the channel, by which he communicateth this goodneſs, in an everflowing ſtream, to his people, who are, therefore, exhorted to praiſe him. The Chriſtian church is now "the Iſrael of God:" her miniſters conſtitute the true "houſe of Aaron," being the ſpiritual progeny of our great High Prieſt; and the Gentiles, not the Jews, are they who know and "fear Jehovah." Let theſe all celebrate,

celebrate, for theſe all have experienced, the benefits and bleſſings of "eternal mercy," by the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead.

5. *I called upon the* LORD *in diſtreſs: the* LORD *anſwered me,* and ſet me *in a large place.*

The true value of every deliverance is to be eſtimated by the nature of the "diſtreſs" which required it. The reſcue of David from his enemies, or that of Iſrael from captivity, might deſervedly be extolled with the ſongs of Sion. How much more, then, is the church univerſal bound to lift up her voice in honour of Jehovah, who hath redeemed her from her ſpiritual adverſaries, and freed her from the bondage of corruption, through Him who "died "for her ſins, and roſe again for her juſtification;" who, in the days of his fleſh, being, on her account, in "diſtreſs" and affliction, "called upon Jehovah, "and was anſwered," by an "enlargement" from the narrow priſon of the grave, to a boundleſs and glorious kingdom.

6. *The* LORD *is on my ſide, I will not fear: what can man do unto me?* 7. *The* LORD *taketh my part with them that help me: therefore ſhall I ſee* my deſire *upon them that hate me.*

By frequent experience of the divine power and mercy, from time to time exerted on the behalf of Iſrael, that nation was inſtructed to truſt in Jehovah; and whenever they did ſo, ſucceſs and victory never failed to attend their ſteps. Would not the caſe be the ſame with us, in all our undertakings, if our faith was right and ſtedfaſt in God, who raiſed up Jeſus from

from the dead, and who hath promiſed to make us "more than conquerors?"

8. *It is better to truſt in the* LORD, *than to put confidence in man.* 9. *It is better to truſt in the* LORD, *than to put confidence in princes.*

Armies of "men," however numerous, and, to appearance, powerful, may be routed and diſperſed at once. "Princes" may not be able to help us; if able, they may fail us, as not being willing to do it; if both able and willing, they may die, ere they can execute their purpoſe. But that hope which is placed in God, can never, by theſe, or any other means, be diſappointed. As we ſo often repeat theſe two verſes, let us act agreeably to the declaration which we then make, and inſtead of courting the world, by undue compliances, for it's deceitful ſmiles, and treacherous favours, let us in all points do our duty, and leave the event to God above. To encourage us in the performance of ſuch a reſolution as this, let it be remembered, that becauſe our Saviour "witneſſed a good confeſſion before Pontius "Pilate," and with meekneſs and patience reſigned himſelf to the death of the croſs for it, therefore God exalted him to glory and honour.

10. *All nations compaſſed me about: but in the name of the* LORD *will I*, or, *I did deſtroy them.* 11. *They compaſſed me about, yea, they compaſſed me about: but in the name of the* LORD *I will*, or, *I did deſtroy them.* 12. *They compaſſed me about like bees, they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the* LORD *I will*, or, *I did deſtroy them.*

The tenor of the Pſalm, being one of thankſgiv-

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ing for a deliverance already experienced, ſeemeth to require, that the verb, at the cloſe of each of theſe verſes, ſhould be rendered in the paſt time; not "I "will deſtroy them," but, "I did deſtroy them;" eſpecially as it is ſaid, "they compaſſed me about, "and, they are quenched." As David and Iſrael were encompaſſed by hoſtile nations, over whom, through God's aſſiſtance, they often triumphed; ſo the Son of David, in the day of his paſſion, was ſurrounded by the furious multitude of Jews, and Gentiles, ſeeking his life; and, after the ſame example, his myſtical body, the church, hath frequently been, on all ſides, vexed and perſecuted in the world. But, through the power of Jehovah, Chriſt overcame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the majeſty on high. The church, likewiſe, hath often riſen ſuperior to the efforts of her innumerable and malicious enemies, whoſe fury hath blazed forth againſt her with ſudden fierceneſs of "fire," when it is applied to a heap of dry "thorns;" and hath been as ſoon at an end; ſhe hath triumphed, yea, and ſhe will finally triumph, "in the name of the "Lord her God."

13. *Thou haſt thruſt ſore at me, that I might fall: but the* LORD *helped me.* 14. *The* LORD *is my ſtrength and my ſong, and is become my ſalvation.* 15. *The voice of rejoicing and ſalvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the* LORD *doth valiantly.* 16. *The right hand of the* LORD *is exalted; the right hand of the* LORD *doth valiantly.*

The church may conſider herſelf as victorious over her great adverſary, the author of all evil, who had

had made his grand effort to effect her deſtruction, by putting to death her champion, and king, Meſſiah. But Jehovah appeared, at the time appointed, to bring him, and virtually, all that ſhould believe in him, from the dead. "Thou haſt thruſt ſore at "me, that I might fall; but Johovah helped me." Riſen, therefore, with Chriſt, from the grave, we proceed to praiſe Jehovah, in the words which Moſes and Iſrael firſt uſed, when they had aſcended from the depths of the ſea, and beheld their enemies deſtroyed for ever; "Jehovah is my ſtrength, and "my ſong, and is become my ſalvation." Exod. xv. 2. And never doth that ſacred day come round, on which the reſurrection of Jeſus is celebrated, but "the voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the "righteous;" there is a noiſe of them that ſing for joy, in the camp of the ſaints; the church militant reſounding with thankſgiving and the voice of melody; paradiſe is reſtored below, and earth beareth ſome reſemblance of heaven, while theſe tranſporting hymns are ſung in honour of our great Redeemer. He is that "Arm and Right Hand of Jehovah," which hath "done valiantly," which hath cruſhed our ſtrongeſt enemy, and is very high "exalted" over all. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become "glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath "daſhed in pieces the enemy." Exod. xv. 6.

17. *I ſhall not die, but live, and declare the works of the* LORD. 18. *The* LORD *hath chaſtened me ſore: but he hath not given me over unto death.*

As Chriſt is riſen, "we ſhall not die, but live;" we ſhall not die eternally, but we ſhall live, in this world,

world, the life of grace, in the world to come, the life of glory; that we may, in both, declare the "works," and chant the praiſes of God our Saviour. We are "chaſtened" for our ſins, but "not given "over to death" and deſtruction everlaſting; nay, our being "chaſtened" is now a proof that we are not ſo "given over; for what ſon is he whom the "father chaſteneth not?" Heb. xii. 7.

19. *Open to me the gates of righteouſneſs; I will go into them, and I will praiſe the* LORD: 20. *This gate,* or, *This is the gate of the* LORD, *into which the righteous ſhall enter.* 21. *I will thank thee, for thou haſt heard me, and art become my ſalvation.*

The faithful, like David and his people of old, demand admiſſion into the courts of the Lord's houſe, there to praiſe him for his great and manifold mercies. But we may extend our ideas much farther, and conſider the whole company of the redeemed, as beholding the angels ready to unbar the gates of heaven, and throw open the doors of the eternal ſanctuary, for the true diſciples of the riſen and glorified Jeſus to enter in. "Open ye," may believers exclaim in triumph to thoſe celeſtial ſpirits, who delight to miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation, "Open "ye the gates of righteouſneſs," thoſe gates, through which nothing unclean can paſs, "that the righte-"ous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter "in," Iſai. xxvi. 2. and ſing, with your harmonious choirs, the praiſes of him who ſitteth upon the throne; for he hath overcome the ſharpneſs of death, he hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. "THIS is the gate of the LORD, into which

the "righteous ſhall enter," to take poſſeſſion of the inheritance prepared for them, to "thank" him who hath "heard them, and is become their ſalvation."

22. *The ſtone which the builders refuſed, is become the head ſtone of the corner.* 23. *This is the* LORD'S *doing, it* is *marvellous in our eyes.*

Whether this paſſage had firſt a reference to the caſe of *David, who, as a figure of Meſſiah, was brought from a ſtate of rejection and perſecution, to the throne of Iſrael; or whether there be any truth in a Jewiſh tradition concerning a certain ſtone, which, after having been, by the builders of the ſecond temple, thrown aſide among the rubbiſh, was at laſt found to be exactly fitted for the honourable place of a chief corner ſtone; it is neither poſſible nor needful to aſcertain. That the verſes belong, in a full and proper ſenſe, to Meſſiah, is confeſſed by the Rabbies, and acknowledged by all. No text in the Old Teſtament is quoted by the writers of the New, ſo often as this, which we meet with in ſix different places; namely, Matt. xxi. 42. Mark xii. 10. Luk. xx. 17. Acts iv. 11. Epheſ. ii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 4. The ſum and ſubſtance of the New Teſtament applications and expoſitions is, that Jeſus Chriſt is the ſtone here mentioned; that he was rejected and ſet at nought by the chief prieſts and phariſees, the then builders of the church; but that, being choſen

* David a Saüle et aliquandiù à decem tribubus reprobatus, ac ſoli Tribui Judæ agnitus, deinde omnium princeps; et ſub figurâ ejus Chriſtus à Judæis ac Gentibus impetitus, mox utrorumque caput, ut ipſe interpretatur. Matt. xxi. 42. BOSSUET.

of

of God, and precious to him, this moſt valuable ſtone, thus deſpiſed and rejected of men, thus thrown among the rubbiſh, and buried in it, was, at length, from ſuch a ſtate, exalted to be the chief corner ſtone in the building, the main ſupport of the edifice, and a centre of union for Jew and Gentile, the two parts of which it conſiſted; that this was the work of God, and the admiration of man. And what can be more truly marvellous, than that a perſon, put to death as a malefactor, and laid in the grave, ſhould from thence ariſe immortal, and become the head of an immortal ſociety; ſhould aſcend into heaven, be inveſted with power, and crowned with glory; and ſhould prepare a way for the ſons of Adam to follow him into thoſe manſions of eternal bliſs!

24. *This* is *the day* which *the* LORD *hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

Of the day on which Chriſt aroſe from the dead, it may, with more propriety than of any other day, be affirmed, "This is the day which Jehovah hath "made." Then it was, that the "rejected ſtone" became the "head of the corner." A morning then dawned, which is to be followed by no evening; a brighter ſun aroſe upon the world, which is to ſet no more; a day began, which will never end; and night and darkneſs departed, to return not again. For thus ſaith the Lord to his church by the prophet Iſaiah, "Thy ſun ſhall no more go down, "neither ſhall thy moon withdraw itſelf, for the "Lord ſhall be thine everlaſting light, and the days "of thy mourning ſhall be ended." Iſai. xl. 20. Eaſter day is in a peculiar manner conſecrated to

Him, who, by his reſurrection, triumphed over death and hell. On that day, through faith, we triumph with him; we "rejoice and are glad in his "ſalvation."

25. *Save now, I beſeech thee,* O LORD: *O* LORD, *I beſeech thee, ſend now proſperity.* 26. *Bleſſed be he that cometh in the name of the* LORD: *we have bleſſed you out of,* or, *you that are of the houſe of the* LORD.

As a prelude to the triumphant manner in which Jeſus Chriſt, after his reſurrection, ſhould aſcend to the heavenly Jeruſalem, he entered the earthly city, before his paſſion, amidſt the acclamations of the multitude, who hailed him as King of Sion, and with palm branches, the emblems of victory, in their hands, ſung before him theſe words, partly taken from our Pſalm, "Hoſanna to the ſon of David: "bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; "Hoſanna in the higheſt." The word, "Hoſanna," is in the original, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא "Save now!" The form of words uſed by the people was both a petition and a congratulation; as if they had ſaid, Let us beſeech Jehovah, in the language of the cxviiith Pſalm, to grant ſalvation to the Son of David, and to ſend us now proſperity under him. Bleſſed is he who thus cometh, not in his own name and power, but in the name and power of Jehovah, according to the prophecies concerning him, to deliver us from all our enemies. Ratify, O Jehovah, in the higheſt, or in heaven, theſe petitions which we make for the ſalvation and proſperity of our King, that thy bleſſings upon him and us may be eſtabliſhed on earth. Since the reſurrection of our Lord, the faithful have expreſſed,

expreſſed, in theſe two verſes, the ſame wiſhes and prayers for the increaſe of his kingdom, and the proſperity of his houſe and family, of his miniſters and his people. "We bleſs you that are of the "houſe of Jehovah."

27. *God is the* LORD, *which hath ſhewed us light: bind the ſacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*

As Jehovah hath manifeſted his power and glory, by raiſing Chriſt from the dead; as he hath, by ſo doing, "ſhewed us the light" of life and immortality; let us obſerve the feſtival, which is deſigned to perpetuate the memory of ſo great and joyful an event. "Chriſt our paſſover," ſaith an Apoſtle, "is "ſacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feaſt." 1 Cor. v. 7. Let us keep it, only changing legal for evangelical ſacraments and ceremonies; let us go to the altar, not to ſee a figure of the lamb of God, as he was to be ſlain; but to behold a repreſentation of him as he hath been ſlain; to behold, in figure, his body broken, and his blood poured out; to eat the bread of life, and drink the cup of ſalvation.

28. *Thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee:* thou art *my God, I will exalt thee.* 29. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for* he is *good: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

The prophet declareth his reſolution to "praiſe" and to "exalt," to magnify and to glorify his "God;" he then concludes, as he began, with exhorting all the world to do the ſame. Preſerve to us, bleſſed Lord, the uſe of theſe divine hymns in thy church, until, at the reſurrection of the juſt, we ſhall celebrate an Eaſter in heaven, and ſing them new in the kingdom of God.

XXIV DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXIX.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm is divided (moſt probably for the advantage of memory) according to the number of letters which compoſe the Hebrew alphabet, into twenty-two portions, of eight verſes each; and not only every portion, but every verſe of that portion, begins with the letter appropriated to it. David muſt undoubtedly have been the author. He deſcribeth, in a ſeries of devotional meditations, the inſtruction and the comfort, which, through all viciſſitudes of mind and fortune, he had ever found in the word of God. The many ſtrong expreſſions of love towards the law, and the repeated reſolutions and vows to obſerve it, will often force us to turn our thoughts to the true David, whoſe "meat and drink it was, to do the "will of him that ſent him." The paſſages more eſpecially characteriſtic of him, as well as thoſe which allude primarily to any particular circumſtances in the hiſtory of the patriarch David, are pointed out in the courſe of the comment. But the chief deſign

ſign through the whole hath been, to draw forth the leſſons of heavenly wiſdom and comfort, contained in this intereſting compoſition, for the ſervice of believers, who, while they are accompliſhing their pilgrimage and warfare upon earth, ſhould continually ſolace themſelves with the cxixth Pſalm, and repair to it as to a fountain, which can never be exhauſted. Between the verſes of each portion, a connection is frequently to be traced, but it doth not often ſeem to extend from one portion to another. The many words employed to expreſs the revelations of God's will, have diſtinct ſignifications, denoting different parts or properties of the Scriptures, which it hath ſometimes been found of great uſe to take into conſideration, while at others the terms appear to be uſed promiſcuouſly, in a general ſenſe, and for the ſake of variety.

ALEPH. PART I.

1. *Bleſſed are the undefiled*, Heb. *perfect*, or, *ſincere in the way, who walk in the law of the* LORD.

By ſin, miſery entered into the world; holineſs alone, therefore, can lead us to happineſs. "The "law of Jehovah" is the path of life, and by "walking in the way," we ſhall attain to the end. But, alas, we are out of the way; we have walked

in the law of ſin, after the luſt of the fleſh; who will direct and ſtrengthen us to walk in the law of God, after the deſires of the Spirit? We are fallen from our integrity; who will raiſe us again? The Goſpel, which was preached to Abraham before the Moſaic diſpenſation, and which was prefigured and believed under it, returneth us, to all theſe queſtions, anſwers of peace. The Redeemer hath prevailed for the pardon of our errors; the Redeemer hath raiſed us from our fallen eſtate; he hath reconducted us to the path of life; in his Name we ariſe and walk; he maketh us righteous, and, conſequently, he maketh us "bleſſed." For, "Bleſſed are the ſincere in the "way, who walk in the law of Jehovah."

2. *Bleſſed are they that keep his teſtimonies*, and that *ſeek him with their whole heart.*

The divine revelations and inſtitutions, whether of the old or the new law, are called God's "teſti-"monies;" they are the witneſſes of his will, and the pledges of his love. They are committed to the church, as a precious depoſit, or truſt, to be by her children "kept," and obſerved. In and by theſe God is to be ſought; "they that ſeek him with their "whole heart," with ardent and undivided affection, fail not to find him, as an inſtructor and a comforter; and they who find him, find all things, and are "bleſſed" indeed.

3. *They alſo* that *do no iniquity*, *they* that *walk in his ways.*

O bliſsful ſtate of thoſe, who are redeemed from the earth, and all earthly deſires; who are delivered from the dominion of ſin; who "follow the Lamb "whither-

"whitherſoever he goeth," and, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, "walk in the ſtatutes and ordinances of "the Lord blameleſs." Luke i. 6. Enroll us, O Lord, in the happy number of theſe thy ſervants; pardon our offences; give us a new nature, and new deſires, averſe from ſin, and inclined to ſanctity; and guard us, that the wicked one touch us not.

4. *Thou haſt commanded* us *to keep thy precepts diligently.*

He who made us, and redeemed us, hath a double right to our ſervice. We are not our own, having been bought with the blood of our Lord; his will, therefore, not our own, is to be done by us. And his will is, that we ſhould "keep his precepts dili-"gently," becauſe in "keeping" them, and in keeping them "diligently," ſo as not to halt between God and the world, but to ſerve one Maſter only, doth our happineſs conſiſt. Now, when the commands of our Superior, and our greateſt Benefactor, of our Friend, our Father, and our God, coincide with our own intereſts temporal and eternal, what pretext can there be for diſobedience and rebellion?

5. *O that my ways were directed*, or, *prepared, and eſtabliſhed, to keep thy ſtatutes!*

The faithful ſoul, enraptured with the contemplation of that bleſſedneſs, which is the conſequence of ſerving God, but conſcious, at the ſame time, of an inability to attain it, ſighs after the refreſhing and ſtrengthening influences of divine grace. She beholdeth her Saviour afar off; ſhe beholdeth the beauty and glorious majeſty of his heavenly kingdom; ſhe beholdeth the way which leads to it; but ſhe hath not power to walk therein. This conſi-

deration

deration cauſeth her to groan earneſtly within herſelf, and at length to breathe forth a wiſh, that the Spirit of truth and love would fix and eſtabliſh her in a holy courſe of thinking, ſpeaking, and acting, upon all occaſions, and would prevent her from turning aſide out of it, to the right hand, or to the left.

6. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy commandments.*

ALL the commandments have the ſame author, and the ſame ſanction. He who thinketh to atone for the breach of one, by the obſervation of another; he who reſerveth to himſelf a licence of indulging any favourite darling luſt, while, in general, he preſerveth the appearance of an exemplary conduct, is a hypocrite, and unleſs he repent, will be brought to "ſhame," if not before men here, yet before men and angels hereafter. "Shame" is the fruit of ſin; Confidence is the effect of righteouſneſs. Wherefore, in all our proceedings, let us "have reſpect," not to the opinions of men, to the corrupt cuſtoms of the world, or to the deceitful ſuggeſtions of our own hearts, but "to the commandments, to all the com-"mandments of God;" let us, as St. John exhorteth, "abide in Chriſt, that when he ſhall appear, we "may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before "him at his coming." 1 John ii. 28.

7. *I will praiſe thee with uprightneſs of heart, when I ſhall have learned thy righteous judgments.*

Confidence in God will always be productive of joy, and undiſſembled "praiſe" will accompany true converſion. The Scriptures are ſtyled God's "righ-"teous judgments," as containing an account of his decrees

decrees and determinations concerning us, with a hiſtory of caſes and precedents, entered upon record for our admonition. By theſe we are to form our opinions, and to regulate our conduct. And when we ſhall have ſo "learned" theſe, as to walk according to them, we ſhall praiſe God with an "upright heart;" our tongues will utter what our hearts feel.

8. *I will keep thy ſtatutes: O forſake me not utterly.*

The reſult of our meditations on God's word, and on the advantages of ſtudying, in order to obſerve it's directions, ſhould always be a reſolution ſo to do, and a prayer for grace to execute that reſolution. Lord, we "will keep thy ſtatutes;" for love can do all things, when thou haſt ſhed it abroad in our hearts. "Love worketh no ill; therefore love is the "fulfilling of the law;" Rom. xiii. 10. and mercy will accept what grace enableth us to perform. Be thou, therefore, ever with us, and "forſake us not;" or if, at any time, to try our faith, and to exerciſe our patience, thou ſhouldeſt depart from us, and leave us to ourſelves for a time, ſhort be thy abſence, and ſpeedy thy return; "O forſake us not utterly!"

BETH. PART II.

9. *Wherewithal ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? By taking heed* thereto *according to thy word.*

Youth enters upon the journey of life, headſtrong and inexperienced, with a bias of original corruption, and all the paſſions awake. In ſuch circumſtances, how ſhall a young man direct his ſteps, ſo

as

as to "eſcape the pollution that is in the world "through luſt?" 2 Pet. i. 4. He muſt, for this purpoſe, take with him the directions to be found in the Scriptures of truth. "I have written unto "you young men," ſays the Beloved Diſciple, "be- "cauſe ye are ſtrong, and the word of God abideth "in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." He who became man for our ſalvation, paſſed through this ſtate of youth, undefiled, that he might, as it were, reclaim and conſecrate it anew to God. Let every young man often meditate on this circumſtance.

10. *With my whole heart have I ſought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.*

Deſpairing of ſufficient aſſiſtance from any other quarter, becauſe no one elſe can either ſhew us the way to heaven, or enable us to walk therein, even if it could be ſhewn, "with our whole heart have "we ſought thee," O God, thy direction, and thine aid; and thou haſt promiſed, that they who "ſeek "ſhall find;" like ſheep without a ſhepherd are we given to ſtray; O preſerve us from error, in principle, and in practice; "let us not wander from "thy commandments."

11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.*

The young man who would cleanſe his way, and take heed according to God's word, muſt "lay up "that word in his heart;" for from the heart are "the iſſues of life," the thoughts, the words, and the actions; when God ruleth in the heart by his word and Spirit, theſe become his ſubjects; then

"the

"the kingdom of heaven is within us," and all is obedience, peace, and love. Thou art our King, O Lord Jeſu; ſuffer no uſurper to poſſeſs thy place in our affections; permit no other Lord to have dominion over us.

12. *Bleſſed art thou, O* LORD: *teach me thy ſtatutes.*

He who is "bleſſed" can make us ſo; he who delighteth to communicate "bleſſing," will do it, if we aſk him, by "teaching us his ſtatutes," which conform us to his nature, that we may live his life, and bleſs his name for ever. When the Word of God is our leſſon, the Spirit of God muſt be our Maſter.

13. *With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.*

The beſt ſign that God hath "taught us his ſta-"tutes" and the greateſt inducement to him to teach us ſtill more and more, is a readineſs to make others partakers of thoſe bleſſings, which we ourſelves have received from him. Jehovah faſhions the "lips" of man, and he expects that they ſhould be employed in his ſervice. "Out of the abundance of the heart "the mouth ſpeaketh," and the ſtream will always ſhew the nature of the fountain. When we make the Scriptures the ſubject of our converſation, we glorify God, we edify our neighbours, and we improve ourſelves.

14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy teſtimonies, as* much as *in all riches.*

Truth and holineſs afford to the ſincere believer a pleaſure more exquiſite, as well as more ſolid and enduring, than that which a miſer feels at the acquiſition of his darling wealth. Let us no longer envy the

the joys of worldly men, no longer be chagrined at the proſperity of the wicked. The "true riches" we may always acquire; and, ſurely, as much as the heaven is higher than the earth, ſo much are heavenly joys above earthly, in kind, degree, and duration.

15. *I will meditate in thy precepts, and have reſpect unto thy ways.*

Meditation is that exerciſe of the mind, whereby it recalls a known truth, as ſome kinds of creatures do their food, to be ruminated upon, until all the nutritious parts are extracted, and fitted for the purpoſes of life. By ſtudy we lay in knowledge, by meditation we reduce that knowledge to practice. And we have then duly "meditated on God's precepts," when in all our proceedings we "have reſpect unto "his ways," comparing our actions with the rule of his word.

16. *I will delight myſelf in thy ſtatutes: I will not forget thy word.*

By frequent meditation and continual practice, the divine "ſtatutes" will become our "delight;" and from the pleaſures, as well as from the cares of the world, we ſhall gladly fly to THEM, for recreation and comfort. Of holy exerciſes there is great variety, and ſpiritual joys are without number. Lord make us to "delight ourſelves in thy ſtatutes," and when we delight in what we learn, we ſhall eaſily retain it in memory; "we ſhall not forget thy word."

GIMEL. PART III.

17. *Deal bountifully with thy ſervant, that I may live, and keep thy word.*

In

In the foregoing parts of the Pſalm, we have heard the believer declaring the excellency of God's word, and expreſſing both his deſire and his reſolution to obſerve it's directions. He now beſeecheth God to remove all impediments, and to accompliſh this work in him. And as a man muſt "live," in order to "work," the firſt petition is, that God would "deal with his ſervant," according to the meaſures of grace and mercy, enabling him to "live" the life of faith, and ſtrengthening him by the Spirit of might in the inner man, to "keep the word" of truth, and to walk in the commandments of his bleſſed Maſter, all his days.

18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*

So far are we naturally from being able to "keep" the word, that we are not able to underſtand it. The law of God is full of divine and ſpiritual truths, concealed under literal hiſtories, viſible ſigns, and external ceremonies. To diſcern theſe נפלאות "wondrous," becauſe hidden, myſterious things, our "eyes," the eyes of our underſtanding, muſt be "unveiled;" that "veil" muſt be taken off, which St. Paul affirmeth to be upon the hearts of the Jews, "in reading the Old Teſtament," and which will continue there, until they turn to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Then the veil will be taken away, and they will behold him, and the redemption by him, as prefigured in their law, and foretold by their prophets.*

* "Revela oculos meos:" aperi, diſpelle umbras, tolle velamentum, quo ſpirituales oculi conteguntur. "Conſiderabo "mirabilia:" ut penitùs introſpiciam, non literam tantùm, ac velut

Pride, prejudice, and intereſt will compoſe a veil, through which a Chriſtian ſhall ſee as little of the New Teſtament, as a Jew doth of the Old. Lord, convince us of our blindneſs, and reſtore us to our ſight.

19. *I am a ſtranger in the earth, hide not thy commandments from me.*

The above requeſt for divine illumination is enforced by this argument, that the petitioner is a "ſtranger," and a ſojourner upon "the earth;" he is travelling, through a foreign country, to his native city, where are his kindred, his treaſure, and his heart; as a ſojourner, he hath renounced the world, which is therefore become his enemy; as a ſtranger, he is fearful of loſing his way; on theſe accounts he requeſteth, that God would compenſate the loſs of earthly comforts, by affording the light of heaven; that he would not "hide his commandments," but ſhew and teach him thoſe ſteps, by which he may aſcend towards heaven, rejoicing in hope of future glory.

20. *My ſoul breaketh for the longing* that it hath *unto thy judgments at all times.*

Another argument here urged, is that "longing" deſire, which the ſoul hath, during her ſtate of pilgrimage below, unto the revelations of God's will. Grieved and vexed at the proſpect of ſin, vanity, and folly, and finding nothing below that will ſatisfy the deſires of an immortal ſpirit, ſhe ſetteth her

velut corticem legis, ſed arcana ſpiritualia, puta in ſabbatis requiem ſempiternam, ſimplicitatem in azymis, in victimis obedientiam, et ubique Chriſtum. BOSSUET.

affections

affections on the better things above, which are propoſed in the Scriptures, as the proper objects of our wiſhes. Her appetite for the divine Word is keen as that of hunger, or thirſt, and "hope deferred "maketh the heart ſick." This diſpoſition is not a tranſient fit, but it is conſtant and uniform "at all "times."

21. *Thou haſt rebuked the proud* that are *curſed, which do err from thy commandments.*

The conſideration of the wretched condition of impenitent ſinners, is another reaſon, why we intreat God to ſet and to keep us in the way of his commandments. "Pride" produceth "error," and obſtinacy in that error; obſtinate tranſgreſſors reject the call, the covenant, and the terms of the Goſpel; to ſuch the "curſe" of the law is ratified and ſealed, and mercy conſigns them over to juſtice, which ſeldom fails to give them ſome "rebukes" even in this world, for a foretaſte to them, and a warning to others.

22. *Remove from me reproach and contempt, for I have kept thy teſtimonies.*

"Reproach and contempt" are liberally beſtowed by the world upon men, who, being not of it, reprove it's deeds by their exemplary conduct. Theſe, to beginners more eſpecially, are ſore lets and hindrances in the way of duty; and, after the example of David, we may beſeech God to "remove" them from us, when we ſuffer them in his cauſe, and know ourſelves to be innocent of the crimes laid to our charge. In the mean time, to comfort ourſelves under them, let us remember, that He, who alone,

in the ſtrict and unlimited ſenſe of the words, could ſay, "I have kept thy teſtimonies," ſuſtained the utmoſt degree of "reproach and contempt," for our ſakes, and was patient and reſigned under it all, until God "removed" it from him by a glorious reſurrection. There remaineth likewiſe a reſurrection for the myſtical body of Chriſt; and then, "Wiſ-"dom will be juſtified of all her children."

23. *Princes alſo did ſit* and *ſpeak againſt me:* but *thy ſervant did meditate in thy ſtatutes.*

"Princes" and rulers have often "ſate" in council upon the "ſervants" of God, and "ſpoken," in judgment, falſe things "againſt them," as they did againſt their bleſſed Maſter, in the days of his fleſh. David hath taught us how to act, in ſuch circumſtances. We are not to renounce the creed, or the commandments, ſhould it ſo happen that "the rulers "and the phariſees" neither believe the former, nor obſerve the latter; but rather, we ſhould "medi-"tate," more than ever, in the Scriptures; that we may draw from thence comfort in the troubles, and direction in the difficulties, which perſecution bringeth upon us; always bearing in mind, when princes command any thing contrary to the word of God, that our ſervice is due to a higher Maſter; "THY "SERVANT did meditate in thy ſtatutes."

24. *Thy teſtimonies alſo* are *my delight, and my counſellers.*

Pleaſure and wiſdom, as the world hath ordered matters, are almoſt incompatible; inſomuch that Solomon, relating the experience he had had of voluptuouſneſs, mentions it as a thing out of the ordi-

nary

nary courſe, that "his wiſdom" all the time "remained with him." Eccleſ. ii. 9. But they who meditate in the word of God, find a pleaſure, which hath wiſdom for it's inſeparable companion. Their ſorrow is diſpelled, and their doubts are reſolved. For how can he be ſorrowful, who ſits by the fountain of joy? How can he be long in doubt, who hath the prophets and apoſtles for his counſellors?

DALETH. PART IV.

25. *My ſoul cleaveth to the duſt: quicken thou me according to thy word.*

The Pſalmiſt, in a ſtate of affliction and humiliation, ſtill ſeeketh relief, by prayer, from the Scriptures. His circumſtances vary, but his affection to the Word of God continueth the ſame. Every one, whoſe affections are ſet on things below, hath reaſon to exclaim with David, "My ſoul cleaveth to the "duſt." From this kind of death we are "quickened," or made alive, by the Goſpel, through that ſame Spirit which raiſed Chriſt from the dead, and which ſhall raiſe us alſo, at the laſt day. Then ſoul and body, perfected together, ſhall take their final farewell of earth, and aſcend to heaven, where the ſoul ſhall feel no paſſion but the love of God, and the body ſhall have no employment but to expreſs it.

26. *I have declared my ways, and thou heardeſt me: teach me thy ſtatutes.*

We ſhould freely and ingenuouſly "declare" to God in prayer our ſins, our temptations, our ſor-

rows, and our undertakings; it argues love, confidence, and ſincerity, ſo to do; it is a means of acquainting us with our own ſtate, of which generally we are ignorant; and it will not fail to procure us thoſe aids from above, of which we ſtand in need. God will "hear" us; he will pardon our offences, ſtrengthen us in our trials, diſpel our grief, and proſper the work of our hands upon us. Theſe mercies, when received, ſhould incline us to walk worthy of them, and, for that purpoſe, to beg the farther inſtruction and direction of the divine Spirit. "I have declared my ways, and thou heardeſt me—"teach me thy ſtatutes."

27. *Make me to underſtand the way of thy precepts: ſo ſhall I talk*, or, *meditate of thy wondrous works*, or, *thy myſteries.*

The heart of the troubled Pſalmiſt is intent upon duty, and the deliverance which he chiefly requeſteth is that from ignorance and error. True knowledge cometh from God, and it cannot be too often deſired of him. It is pleaſant as the light, extenſive as the heavens, and more profitable than the treaſures of eaſtern kings. He who is led to "underſtand" the celeſtial "myſteries" of the Scriptures, will never want ſubjects for "meditation," and ſhould never permit thoſe ſubjects either to ſlip out of his mind, or to lie unimproved in it.

28. *My ſoul melteth for heavineſs: ſtrengthen thou me according to thy word.*

Let us not marvel, if ſin bring us to the knowledge of ſorrow, ſince he, who "knew no ſin," was yet, on our account, ſo intimately "acquainted with

"grief."

"grief." In the garden, his ſoul "melted for hea-"vineſs," and "there appeared an angel from hea-"ven ſtrengthening him." Luke xxii. 43. Our tranſgreſſions deſerve an eternity of ſorrow; let us not, therefore, repine at any portion of it, that may fall to our ſhare in time. No, bleſſed Jeſu, let us ſuffer with thee, as both a means and a pledge of our future glorification with thee. Only "ſtrengthen us, "according to" the promiſes in "thy word." In this life, all we aſk is faith and patience; faith, to aſſure us that thou ordereſt all things for the beſt; and patience, to preſerve that faith. Theſe were the proviſions with which thy beſt beloved ſervants of old travelled through this mortal life. Enable us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, to do the ſame; that ſo, when the days of our earthly pilgrimage ſhall be happily accompliſhed, we may ſit down, with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, in thy heavenly kingdom.

29. *Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciouſly.* 30. *I have choſen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid* before me.

It is plain that "the way of truth," in the latter of theſe two verſes, is oppoſed to "the way of "lying," or of "falſehood," in the former. The one comprehends every thing in doctrine and practice that is right, and therefore "true;" the other denotes every thing which is wrong, and therefore "falſe." Of theſe two ways man hath his choice. God points out to him the former by his Word, and offers to conduct him in it by his Spirit. Satan ſhews him the latter, and endeavours to ſeduce him

into it by his temptations. The Pſalmiſt declareth himſelf to have "choſen" God's way, and to have "laid" the Scriptures "before him," as the chart by which he was to direct his courſe. He therefore prays, that the other way may be far "removed" from him; and that God would vouchſafe him ſuch a thorough acquaintance with the "way" of truth, as might prevent him from ever wandering into the path of error. How much depends upon the road we chuſe! How difficult is it, in a divided and diſtracted world, to chuſe aright! Yet this choice, ſo important, ſo difficult, frequently remains to be made by us, when we have neither judgment to chuſe, nor ſtrength to travel!

31. *I have ſtuck unto thy teſtimonies; O* LORD, *put me not to ſhame.*

Having once choſen our road, it remains that we perſevere in it; ſince better had it been for us never to have known the way of truth, than to forſake it, when known; and we have the ſame reaſons to go on, which induced us to begin; nay, though the love of the world may require novelty and variety to ſupport it, yet in the bleſſed union of the ſoul with it's Redeemer, true affection will increaſe with time and acquaintance. The Pſalmiſt doth not ſay only, "I have followed," "but I have ſtuck unto thy "teſtimonies;" I have adhered ſo cloſely and firmly to them, that temptation has in vain eſſayed to allure, and perſecution as vainly attempted to force me from them. And therefore he beſeecheth God ſo to continue his grace and favour, that he may never, by falling from his ſtedfaſtneſs, diſgrace his Maſter,

Maſter, his cauſe, his brethren, himſelf, nor be put to ſhame at the laſt day. "O LORD, put me not "to ſhame!"

32. *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart.*

The true Chriſtian is always proceeding in the way of godlineſs, though not always with equal pace. In grief, whether for temporal or ſpiritual loſſes, the heart is contracted, and the ſpirits are all ſummoned home to comfort and ſupport it, ſo that the faculties are left feeble and ſluggiſh; and then the progreſs can be but ſlow. This was the Pſalmiſt's caſe. But even then he promiſes, that, when God, by ſending him joy and gladneſs, ſhould "enlarge his heart," dilate his ſpirits, and put life and ſtrength into his actions, he would quicken his pace in proportion, and, with renewed vigour and alacrity, "run the "way" of the divine "commandments," until it ſhould have brought him to reſt and felicity in the boſom of God.

XXV DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

HE. PART V.

33. *Teach me, O* LORD, *the way of thy ſtatutes; and I ſhall keep it unto the end.*

Inſtruction from above is neceſſary for the children of God, while they continue in this world. The more we know, the more we ſhall deſire to know; we ſhall beg a daily ſupply of grace, as well as of bread; and a taſte of "the cluſter of Eſhcol" will

make us long after the vintage of Canaan. Numb. xiii. 23. Religion is the art of holy living, and then only known when it is practiſed; as he is not a maſter of muſic, who can read the notes which compoſe it, but he who has learned how to take a leſſon readily from the book, and play it on his inſtrument: after which, the pleaſure it affords will be a ſufficient motive for continuing ſo to do. "Teach me, O "Lord, the way of thy ſtatutes; and I ſhall keep it "unto the end."

34. *Give me underſtanding, and I ſhall keep thy law; yea, I ſhall obſerve it with* my *whole heart.*

Much "underſtanding" is needful in order to the "obſervation" of the law, that we may know what is commanded, and what is forbidden, and how far; that we may avoid the ſnares laid for us in the way of duty; that we may reſpect things according to their due rank and worth; that we may do good works in their proper time, place, and manner; above all, that the affections may be directed by the judgment, and not the judgment by the affections. The law cannot be obſerved, unleſs it be underſtood; and it is underſtood in vain, unleſs it be obſerved; or rather, if it be indeed underſtood, if there be upon the mind, at all times, a full conviction of divine truths, and their excellency, not only in themſelves, but compared with the offers of the world, the fleſh, and the devil, then it will certainly operate in hearty obedience. "Give me underſtanding, and "I ſhall keep thy law; yea, I ſhall obſerve it with "my whole heart."

35. *Make*

35. *Make me to go*, or, *conduct me in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight.*

He who teacheth us the way to heaven, muſt alſo "conduct" us in it, and the ſame grace muſt give light and ſtrength. The Scripture is our rule, the Spirit is our guide; and, from beginning to end, it is God who inclines, prepares, and enables us "to "go in the" clean and pleaſant "path of his com-"mandments;" a path, which leads us far from the noiſe and pollution of the world, through a paradiſe of promiſes and comforts, grateful as the fragrance of early ſpring, or the incenſe aſcending from the holy altar. Happy the ſoul, that can ſay to God, "therein do I delight:" which is at the ſame time a reaſon for her to aſk, and for him to grant, a continuance and perſeverance therein.

36. *Incline my heart unto thy teſtimonies, and not to covetouſneſs.*

The wit of man may conceive, and his tongue may utter, great things of God and holineſs, while his heart is averſe from both; therefore David ſaith, not only, "Give me underſtanding," but, "incline "my heart." Our true characters are formed by the deſires of our hearts, which, not finding ſatisfaction in themſelves, muſt ſeek it in ſomething without them. The world offers itſelf firſt; and cuſtom, as well as nature, inclineth us to the love of that, and of money which commandeth all things in it. Such love is contrary to the love of God, being one of the thorns which choke the ſeed, and render it unfruitful. Therefore the Pſalmiſt requeſteth, that his heart may be "inclined to the divine teſtimonies,

"and

"and not to covetouſneſs." And as God only can change the diſpoſition of the heart, to God he preferreth his petition. It is to be obſerved, that by the words, "Incline not my heart to covetouſneſs," is meant, "ſuffer not my heart to be inclined," or, "give it not over to covetouſneſs."

37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity:* and *quicken thou me in thy way.*

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity;" and what is there elſe on earth to behold? What is there which, when poſſeſſed, doth not diſappoint the expectation conceived of it, the poſſeſſors themſelves being judges? Solomon took an inventory of the world, and all the beſt things in it; he caſt up the account, and the ſum total was, VANITY. The "eye" is the grand inlet of temptation, and by "beholding," we come to deſire and long after the objects of ſenſe; from which time our affection toward the objects of faith waxeth cold. "Turn away "our eyes," therefore, O Lord, "from beholding "vanity, and quicken us in thy way;" mortify the fleſh, and the ſpirit ſhall live.

38. *Stabliſh thy word unto thy ſervant, who* is devoted *to thy fear.*

The "word" here intended is the word of promiſe, which the believer intreateth God to "ſtabliſh," confirm, or accompliſh to him by his ſanctification, that ſo he may walk in the way of truth and life. He pleadeth his title to the promiſe, as a "ſervant" of God, and one who "feared" to offend him.

39. *Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.*

The

The "reproach" which we have all moſt reaſon to dread, and to pray that God would keep far from us here and hereafter, is that of having forſaken and apoſtatiſed from thoſe ſtatutes and "judgments" revealed in the ſcriptures, which we own to be ſo "good," ſo pleaſant, and ſo profitable.

40. *Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteouſneſs.*

The Pſalmiſt appealeth to God, the ſearcher of hearts, for the truth of the proteſtation he was about to make, that the deſire of his ſoul was toward the divine Word; not only toward the promiſes, to believe and embrace them, but alſo toward the "precepts," to obſerve and to do them. He therefore prayeth, with confidence, that God would finiſh the work he had begun, and enable him to carry his wiſhes into execution, by continually "quickening" and enlivening him more and more through grace, to finiſh his courſe "in righteouſneſs," and to obtain that crown which is to be the reward of it.

V A U. PART VI.

41. *Let thy mercies come alſo unto me, O* LORD, *even thy ſalvation according to thy word.*

Perſecution and affliction, of which they never fail, in ſome way or other, to have their ſhare, who live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhould teach us, like David, to fly for refuge to that "mercy," from whence proceedeth all "ſalvation," temporal and eternal; and to pray, without ceaſing, for the accompliſhment of that "Word," which promiſeth to the people of God deliverance out of all their troubles.

42. *So*

42. *So ſhall I have to anſwer him that reproacheth me: for I truſt in thy word.*

A believer, truſting in the promiſes of God, when the whole world hath forſaken him, and no ſign or probability appears of their being fulfilled, is always, among the wicked, an object of ſcorn and "reproach." Such was David, when Shimei curſed him. Such was our bleſſed Maſter, when men ſaid "He truſted in God that he would deliver him, let "him deliver him now if he will have him." And his diſciples are not to expect better uſage. "Therefore," ſaith one of them, "we both labour and ſuffer re-"proach, becauſe we truſt in the living God." 1 Tim. iv. 10. To ſilence theſe reproaches, we beſeech God to manifeſt his mercy in our ſalvation. The reſurrection of Jeſus was an "anſwer" to his blaſphemers; and the mouth of all wickedneſs will be ſtopped at the laſt day.

43. *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgment.*

In the mean time, while affliction preſſeth hard upon us, while our deliverance is deferred, and the enemy is ſuffered to reproach and blaſpheme, our prayer muſt be, that God would give us courage and utterance, ſtill to confeſs him before men, and boldly to ſpeak his "word of truth," for the edification of ſome, and the confutation of others; as knowing, that our faith is not vain, nor ſhall we be diſappointed of our "hope," ſince both are built upon the "judgments," or revealed decrees of him, who can neither err, nor deceive.

44. *So ſhall I keep thy law continually, for ever and ever.*

By

By means of ſtrength and power from above, we ſhall be enabled to ſerve God, in adverſity, as well as in proſperity; and amidſt all difficulties and dangers, into which the path of duty may lead us, Charity will perſevere in it, till arriving at the gate of heaven, and there taking leave of her companions and fellow travellers, Faith and Hope, ſhe ſhall enter thoſe bliſsful regions, to perform to eternity that perfect will of God, which the infirmities of fallen nature prevented her from having ſo fully performed, here below.

45. *And I will walk at liberty, for I ſeek thy precepts.*

No external preſſure can take away that ſpiritual "liberty," which the faithful Chriſtian experienceth when he hath made an open confeſſion of the truth, and determined at all events, to do his duty. Then he is no longer ſtreightened by fear, but ſet at large by love. "The truth maketh him free, and he "walketh in the liberty of the children of God;" a liberty, which they only obtain, who "ſeek his pre-"cepts," and, by the performance of them, are reſcued from the bondage both of tyrannical deſires and ſlaviſh fears.

46. *I will ſpeak of thy teſtimonies alſo before kings, and will not be aſhamed.*

A prophet may be called "before kings," either in the courſe of his office, to inſtruct them, or elſe, in a judiciary way, to give an account of his faith. In either caſe, if he "walketh at liberty," he will "ſpeak of God's teſtimonies," with due reverence to the perſon and authority of his prince, but as one who is neither afraid nor "aſhamed" to de-

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clare the whole counſel of heaven to any being upon earth.

47. *And I will delight myſelf in thy commandments, which I have loved.* 48. *My hands alſo will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved: and I will meditate in thy ſtatutes.*

He who would preach boldly to others, muſt himſelf "delight" in the practice of what he preacheth. If there be in us a new nature, it will "love the "commandments of God," as being congenial to it: on that which we love we ſhall continually be "meditating;" and our meditation will end in action; we ſhall "lift up the hands which hang down," Heb. xii. 12. that they may "work the works of God, "while it is day; becauſe the night cometh, when "no man can work." John ix. 4.

ZAIN. PART VII.

49. *Remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.*

God promiſed ſalvation, before he giveth it, to excite our deſire of it, to exerciſe our faith, to prove our ſincerity, to perfect our patience. For theſe purpoſes, he ſeemeth to have ſometimes forgotten his word, and to have deſerted thoſe whom he had engaged to ſuccour and relieve; in which caſe, he would have us, as it were, to remind him of his promiſe, and ſolicit his performance of it. The Pſalmiſt here inſtructeth us to prefer our petition upon theſe grounds; firſt, that God cannot prove falſe to his own word: "Remember the word unto "thy

"thy ſervant;" ſecondly, that he will never diſappoint an expectation which himſelf hath raiſed; "upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope."

50. *This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.*

While performance is delayed we "rejoice in "hope;" Rom. xii. 12. and the promiſe is our "comfort in affliction;" a comfort, divine, ſtrong, laſting; a comfort, that will not, like all others, fail us when we moſt want it, in the day of ſickneſs, and at the hour of death; but will always keep pace with our neceſſities, increaſing in proportion as the pleaſures of the world and the fleſh decreaſe in us, and then becoming compleat, when they are no more. So powerful is the word of God to revive us, when dead, either in ſins, or in ſorrow; "thy word "hath quickened me."

51. *The proud hath had me greatly in deriſion: yet have I not declined from thy law.*

A true ſervant of God believeth the promiſes, and practiſeth the precepts of his bleſſed Maſter. The haughty infidel will ſcoff at him for one part of his conduct; the inſolent worldling will ridicule him for the other. But neither will induce him to diſbelieve, or to diſobey. Let us be certain that we have the divine "law" for our warrant in what we believe, and in what we do; and then, let not the "deriſion "of the proud" prevail upon us to "decline from it."

52. *I remembered thy judgments of old, O* LORD; *and have comforted myſelf.*

The great remedy againſt that temptation which ariſeth from the reproaches of our ſcornful and inſulting

ſulting adverſaries, is here preſcribed, namely, a "remembrance of God's judgments of old," whether we underſtand the "judgments" of his mouth, or thoſe of his hand; his righteous decrees for the puniſhment of bad, and reward of good men, or the many and wonderful inſtances of his executing thoſe decrees, from the beginning of the world, recorded in the ſacred hiſtory. Theſe are ſources of real and endleſs "comfort" upon ſuch occaſions; becauſe nothing can happen to us, which hath not happened to God's people "of old;" no caſe, of which there is not a precedent in Scripture, where we may read the proceſs of ſimilar trials, their iſſue, and the final ſentence of the judge, who is ſtill the ſame, and whoſe rule of procedure and determination is invariable.

53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, becauſe of the wicked that forſake thy law.*

The conſequence of a due meditation on God's judgments, will be a compaſſion for the "wicked," on whom thoſe judgments, in the end, fall; ſo that inſtead of feeling for ourſelves, on account of the injuries they do us, we ſhall feel for them, who are thereby drawing down vengeance and deſtruction on their own heads. "Daughters of Jeruſalem," ſaid the bleſſed Jeſus, when led to be crucified, "weep "not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your "children." Luke xxiii. 28.

54. *Thy ſtatutes have been my ſongs in the houſe of my pilgrimage.*

The ſoul, which deſcended from above, and longs to return thither again, is a ſtranger and a ſojourner upon

upon earth. The body is "the houſe of her pil-"grimage," in which ſhe is confined, during her ſtate of exile. And, how harſh ſoever the uſage may be which ſhe receiveth from the world, ſhe ever findeth joy and comfort, as once did the fugitive and wandering ſon of Jeſſe, in making God's "ſtatutes" the ſubjects of her Pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual "ſongs," until death ſhall reſtore her to liberty. Then, aſcending to heaven from whence ſhe came, and, like the early lark, ſinging as ſhe aſcends, ſhe will ſeek her native abode; there to celebrate her redemption from the earth, and to chant forth the praiſes of Him who hath redeemed her, in a new ſong, before the throne.

55. *I have remembered thy name,* O LORD, *in the night, and have kept thy law.*

By the "name" of God, his nature, ſo much at leaſt of it as we are concerned to know, and are capable of receiving, is revealed to us. Such a love had the Pſalmiſt for it, on that account, that as in the day God's ſtatutes were his ſongs, in the night God's name was the ſubject of his meditation. With his tongue he praiſed him in the day, with his heart he deſired him in the night-watches. At night, the diſſipation, noiſe, and hurry of buſineſs ceaſe; external ſilence produceth internal calmneſs and compoſure, inviting us to celeſtial contemplation; the world is dead to us, and we are dead to the world; the ſoul is then moſt alive, and ſeemeth to experience a foretaſte of that time, when the body and it's concerns ſhall no more moleſt and impede her. The good effect of hours thus ſecretly paſſed in holy

exercises, will appear openly in our lives and conversations; "I have remembered thy name, O Lord, "in the night, and," as the fruit of it, "have kept "thy law."

56. *This I had, because I kept thy commandments.*

As one sin is often the consequence and the punishment of another, so one act of obedience is the issue and the reward of another; and, to him who hath well used the grace already received, shall more be given. "This I had," this ability to perform my duty, and to delight in the performance of it day and night, was vouchsafed unto me, "be-"cause I kept thy commandments," because I was not heretofore disobedient, but employed the strength with which thou, O Lord, hadst endued me, not in doing mine own will, but thine.

CHETH. PART VIII.

57. Thou art *my portion*, O LORD: *I have said that I would keep thy words.*

Happy the man, who can sincerely say, "Thou "art my portion, O LORD;" I have considered, and made my choice; from henceforth, I renounce all things for the love of thee; thou art sufficient for me; thee only I desire to enjoy, and therefore, thee only I desire to please; "I have said that I "would keep thy words."

58. *I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me, according to thy word.*

He who hath chosen God for his "portion," will earnestly seek his "favour," and the light of his coun-

countenance; he who hath promiſed and vowed to "keep the words" of God, hath need to ſeek that favour and that light, that he may have grace and power to fulfill his engagements. Mercy is the ſole fountain of every good gift for which we aſk, and God's promiſe the only ground upon which we aſk it; "be merciful unto me, according to thy word."

59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.*

The Pſalmiſt did not content himſelf with barely praying for ſtrength and grace, but his faith, relying on the word of promiſe, put itſelf in motion. He conſidered his "ways," his courſe of thinking, ſpeaking, and acting; how far he had proceeded in it, and whither it led him; and this conſideration produced a converſion of the whole man, of the heart and it's affections, from the creature to the Creator, as he hath revealed himſelf in the Scriptures of truth; "I turned my feet unto thy teſti-"monies."

60. *I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

A true penitent ſuffereth no time to be loſt between his good reſolutions and the performance of them. "Draw me," ſaith the church, "and we "will RUN after thee." Cant. i. 4. Andrew, Peter and others, ſtayed not for a ſecond call from Chriſt, but followed him immediately upon the firſt. By deferring our return to duty, we loſe many comfortable fruits, which it would have produced both in ourſelves and others, while the difficulties of ever return-

returning, and the danger of never returning, are daily and hourly increasing.

61. *The bands*, or, *troops of the ungodly have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.*

To be robbed, or plundered of his possessions in this world, was by no means a case peculiar to David. The primitive Christians were continually so treated; and our Lord gives all his disciples warning to stand prepared for such events, ready in disposition, in heart and mind, to quit all, as they who first followed him literally did. The Apostle tells us of some, who not only bore patiently, but even "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods:" the reason he assigns for so extraordinary a behaviour, deserves to be noted and remembered; "knowing "that they had in heaven a better and an enduring "substance." Heb. x. 34. They who part with earth to gain heaven, and exchange the world for it's Maker, certainly lose nothing by the bargain. Nay, there will come an hour, when, for that foretaste of glory which a good conscience affordeth to it's happy possessor, the dearest lover of mammon would joyfully give up all the gold of Peru, and all the diamonds of Indostan.

62. *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*

So far were temporal losses from causing the Psalmist to forsake God, that he sought him the more earnestly and fervently on that account, rising at "midnight to give thanks" for all his "righteous "judgments" and dispensations towards his servants. Thus Paul and Silas, not only impoverished, but impri-

impriſoned, for the teſtimony of Jeſus; yet in that ſituation, with their feet faſt in the ſtocks, "ſang "praiſes at midnight," thereby turning their night into day, and their priſon into a paradiſe; when, lo, their hallelujahs aſcended to heaven, and God aroſe to judgment; the earth trembled, the doors were opened, the chains fell off, the gaoler and his family were converted, and the Apoſtles ſet at liberty. And although there be no obligation upon men to "riſe "at midnight," in order to "give thanks;" yet, if they who awake at that, or any other time, would accuſtom their hearts, at leaſt, to ſo divine an exerciſe, they would find it always productive of the moſt comfortable effects.

63. I am *a companion of all* them *that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.*

As no ſufferings ſhould make us neglect our intercourſe with God, ſo neither ſhould they tempt us to forſake the communion of ſaints, or fellowſhip of them who "fear God, and work righteouſneſs." Theſe are knit together in love, as members of the ſame myſtical body, inſomuch that "if one member "ſuffer, or be honoured, all the members ſhould "ſuffer, or be honoured with it;" theſe we ſhould own at all times, in proſperity, and in adverſity; with theſe ſhould our acquaintance and converſation be, for the mutual improvement and conſolation of them and of ourſelves. Of ſuch was David a "com-"panion," and ſuch the Redeemer himſelf "is not "aſhamed to call brethren." Heb. ii, 11.

64. *The earth, O* LORD, *is full of thy mercy: teach me thy ſtatutes.*

Heaven and earth, and all that are therein, declare, from day to day, the "mercy" of their Creator and Preſerver, which is "over all his works." And his goodneſs, thus diſplayed through the outward and viſible world, forbids us to doubt of his loving kindneſs towards thoſe immortal ſpirits, which, in tenements of mortal clay, make, for a while, their abode here below; during which ſhort period, they beſeech him earneſtly to grant them ſuch a portion of that ſaving knowledge, which is his gift, as may ſecure to them, when they ſhall depart hence, a place in a happier country, and a more enduring city. "Teach me thy ſtatutes!"

TETH. PART IX.

65. *Thou haſt dealt well with thy ſervant, O* LORD, *according to thy word.*

As the ſenſe of our wants ſhould prepare the mind for prayer, ſo gratitude for bleſſings received ſhould tune the heart to praiſe. In preferring our petitions, ſelf-love may ſometimes have a ſhare; but thankfulneſs is the offſpring of an ingenuous ſpirit, and the love of God. Let a man carefully recount the divine mercies ſhewn to him from his birth, conſidering withal how unworthy he hath been of the leaſt of thoſe mercies, as alſo how far preferable his ſtate is to that of many others; and he will find reaſon "in all things to give thanks," to acknowledge, with David, the goodneſs and truth of Jehovah, and to ſay, "Thou haſt dealt well with thy "ſervant, O LORD, according to thy word."

66. *Teach*

66. *Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.*

From thankſgiving the Pſalmiſt returneth again to prayer, as, while we continue in this world, we muſt all do. The gift, for which he now prayeth, is that of "a good judgment with knowledge," as the former muſt enable us to make a proper uſe of the latter. The word טעם which is here tranſlated, "judgment," ſignifies bodily "taſte," and that faculty in the mind which anſwers to it, the faculty of diſcerning, diſtinguiſhing, and judging rightly of things moral and ſpiritual, as the palate doth of meats, their different flavours, and qualities. Without this taſte, or diſcretion, we miſtake falſehood for truth in our ſtudies, and wrong for right in our practice; ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm may paſs with us for religion, or elſe licentiouſneſs may intrude itſelf upon us, under the name and notion of liberty: in a word, our learning and knowledge prove uſeleſs, if not prejudicial to us. A ſound mind, therefore, ſhould, above all things, be deſired of God in our prayers; and thoſe prayers will be heard, when we can ſincerely profeſs a readineſs to be directed by God's laws, through faith in their author, his promiſes and threatnings; on which ground David urgeth his requeſt; "for I have believed thy commandment."

67. *Before I was afflicted, I went aſtray: but now have I kept thy word.*

We collect from this verſe, that proſperity is too often the parent of ſin; that adverſity is, firſt, it's puniſhment, then, it's remedy; and that every conſiderate

ſiderate man, who hath been afflicted, will thankfully acknowledge as much. "When afflictions fail "to have their due effect, the caſe is deſperate. "They are the laſt remedy which indulgent Provi- "dence uſes; and if they fail, we muſt languiſh "and die in miſery and contempt. Vain men! How "ſeldom do we know what to wiſh, or to pray for! "When we pray againſt misfortunes, and when we "fear them moſt, we want them moſt. The ſhorteſt "and the beſt prayer which we can addreſs to Him "who knows our wants, and our ignorance in aſk- "ing, is this—Thy will be done." Lord Bolingbroke's Reflections on Exile, p. 276.

68. *Thou* art *good, and doeſt good: teach me thy ſtatutes.*

In other words, as Biſhop Patrick hath well connected and paraphraſed it, "Thou art in thine own "nature kind and good; and nothing elſe can pro- "ceed from thee, who deſigneſt our good, even "when thou afflicteſt us; take what methods thou "pleaſeſt with me; only teach me effectually to do "as thou wouldſt have me."

69. *The proud have forged a lie againſt me:* but *I will keep thy precepts with* my *whole heart.*

Every diſciple of Chriſt, who, like his Maſter, goeth contrary to the ways of the world, and condemneth them, muſt expect to be, like that Maſter, ſlandered and calumniated by the world. To ſuch ſlanders and calumnies, a good life is the beſt anſwer. When a friend once told Plato, what ſcandalous ſtories his enemies had propagated concerning him,

I will

"I will live ſo, replied that great philoſopher, that nobody ſhall believe them.

70. *Their heart is as fat as greaſe*; but *I delight in thy law.*

The "fatneſs of the heart" implieth, in this place, two things in thoſe of whom it is affirmed; luxury, and it's conſequence, inſenſibility to thoſe ſpiritual and divine truths, which are not only the ſtudy, but the "delight" of temperate and holy perſons, who gladly fly from large companies, full tables, coſtly meats, and rich wines, to enjoy in private, the more exalted pleaſures of abſtinence, meditation, and prayer.

71. *It* is *good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn thy ſtatutes.*

God's ſtatutes are beſt learned in the ſchool of affliction, becauſe by affliction the great impediments to our learning them are removed: pride is ſubdued, and concupiſcence is extinguiſhed. "He that hath "ſuffered in the fleſh," ſaith an apoſtle, "hath ceaſ-"ed from ſin;" 1 Pet. iv. 1. and in an immunity from ſin conſiſteth one of the greateſt felicities of heaven, which thus deſcends into the afflicted ſoul, ſo as to render even the ſtate of ſickneſs itſelf, in ſome ſort, deſirable. Strange as this propoſition may appear, the reader will find it's truth demonſtrated, by the inimitable Biſhop Jeremy Taylor, in that truly golden tract, "The Rule and Exerciſes of Holy "Dying," Chap. iii. Sect. 6. on "The Advantages "of Sickneſs."

72. *The law of thy mouth* is *better unto me than thouſands of gold and ſilver.*

Affliction

Affliction taketh from us the inclination to offend, and it giveth us, in return, a knowledge of that law which "is better," and which, when we are thoroughly acquainted with it, we ſhall eſteem to be better, "than thouſands of gold and ſilver;" better in it's nature, for it is from heaven, they are from the earth; better in it's uſe, for it bringeth ſalvation to our ſouls, whereas they can only procure ſuſtenance for the body; better in point of duration, for the benefits of one are certain and eternal, the advantages of the others temporal and uncertain. Bleſſed are they, who ſeek in the Scriptures the true riches; who traffic for the ſpiritual gains of celeſtial wiſdom; for ſurely "the merchandiſe of it is better "than the merchandiſe of ſilver, and the gain there-"of than fine gold." Prov. iii. 14.

XXV DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

JOD. PART X.

73. *Thy hands have made me, and faſhioned me: give me underſtanding, that I may learn thy commandments.*

The formation of man was the laſt and nobleſt work of God, and it is a ſtanding miracle of divine wiſdom and power. The conſideration, that God made us, is here urged as an argument why he ſhould not forſake and reject us, ſince every artiſt hath a value for his own work, proportioned to it's excellence. It is, at the ſame time, an acknowledgment of the ſervice we owe him, founded on the relation which a creature beareth to his Creator. And the petition implieth

implieth in it a confeſſion of our preſent inability to know his will without his revelation, and to do it without his grace.

74. *They that fear thee will be glad when they ſee me: becauſe I have hoped in thy reward.*

They who "fear God" are naturally "glad when "they ſee" and converſe with one like themſelves; but more eſpecially ſo, when it is one whoſe faith and patience have carried him through troubles, and rendered him victorious over temptations; one who hath "hoped in God's word," and hath not been diſappointed. Every ſuch inſtance affordeth freſh encouragement to all thoſe, who, in the courſe of their warfare, are to undergo like troubles, and to encounter like temptations. In all our trials let us, therefore, remember, that our brethren, as well as ourſelves, are deeply intereſted in the event, which may either ſtrengthen or weaken the hands of the multitudes.

75. *I know, O* LORD, *that thy judgments* are *right, and* that *thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me.*

This humble, pious, and dutiful confeſſion will be made by every true child of God, when under the correction of his heavenly father. From whatever quarter afflictions come upon us, they are "the judgments "of God," without whoſe providence nothing befalleth us. His judgments are always "right, or juſt," duly proportioned to the diſeaſe and ſtrength of the patient; in ſending them, God is "faithful" and true to his word, wherein he hath never promiſed the crown without the croſs, but hath, on the contrary, aſſured us, that one will be neceſſary, in order to our obtaining

obtaining the other; and that they who are beloved by him ſhall not ſin with impunity, nor go aſtray without a call to return. All this we ought to "know," or to be aſſured of beyond doubt, as we may be, from the many declarations in Scripture, from our own experience, and from that of others.

76. *Let I pray thee, thy merciful kindneſs be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy ſervant.*

In the former verſe, the criminal, finding that the hand of God was upon him, had owned the juſtice and the faithfulneſs of his judge in the puniſhment inflicted. Judgment having thus had her perfect work, the offender, now humbled and penitent, maketh application to the throne of grace, and ſueth for that mercy which God, by his "word" hath promiſed to his "ſervants," who are chaſtened, not for their deſtruction, but for their ſalvation. When God's "judgments" have brought us to an acknowledgment of our ſins, his "merciful kindneſs" will ſpeedily be our "comfort."

77. *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law* is *my delight.*

The mercies of God are "tender mercies," they are the mercies of a father to his children, nay, tender as the compaſſion of a mother over the ſon of her womb. They "come unto us, when we are not able to go to them. By them alone we "live" the life of faith, of love, of joy and gladneſs. And to ſuch as "delight" in his law, God will grant theſe mercies, and this life; he will give them pardon, and by ſo doing, he will give them life from the dead.

78. *Let the proud be aſhamed, for they dealt perverſely*

verſely with me without a cauſe; but *I will meditate in thy precepts.*

This complaint of the Pſalmiſt hath been made by the faithful in all ages, that the men of the world "dealt perverſely with them without a cauſe," or oppreſſed them falſely, firſt ſpreading ſlanders and calumnies concerning them, and then perſecuting them for thoſe ſuppoſed crimes. Such uſage ſhould have no other effect upon us, than it had upon David. He prayed that "ſhame" and diſappointment might teach humility to the "proud," and applied himſelf ſtill more and more to meditate in the "precepts" of his God.

79. *Let thoſe that fear thee turn unto me, and thoſe that have known thy teſtimonies.*

David beſeecheth God, if any good men had been alienated from him, either through fear, prejudice, or offence, that they might return to him, join, and acknowledge him. To thee, O thou Son of David, and King of the Spiritual Iſrael, let thoſe among thy people, who, through any temptation, have fallen from their allegiance, return, and be ſubject.

80. *Let my heart be found in thy ſtatutes; that I be not aſhamed.*

This is a prayer neceſſary for all men to uſe at all times, but more particularly in ſeaſons of perſecution and temptation. By "ſoundneſs of heart" is meant ſolidity and ſtedfaſtneſs in grace and virtue, as oppoſed to the mere form of godlineſs, or fair ſhew of the hypocrite, which conceal the rottenneſs and corruption lurking within; and alſo to the ſudden and vaniſhing goodneſs of the temporary convert, which

which quickly diſappears like the morning dew, and withers like the ſeed ſown on a rock. When internal holineſs accompanies and actuates that which is external, when the word is thoroughly rooted, and faith hath acquired the ſovereignty over our deſires, then our "hearts" are "ſound in God's ſtatutes," and there is hope that, in the day of trial, we ſhall not give our brethren cauſe to be aſhamed of us, nor be ourſelves "aſhamed" before God.

CAPH. PART XI.

81. *My ſoul fainteth for thy ſalvation:* but *I hope in thy word*, or, *I have expected thy word.*

Thus have the true ſervants of God, in every age, expreſſed their ardent deſire of his ſalvation. Thus did the patriarchs, the prophets, the kings, and the faithful people formerly wiſh to behold the advent of their Saviour in the fleſh; until Simeon, taking him in his arms, ſpoke what they would all have ſpoken, had they been preſent, "Lord, now letteſt thou thy "ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word; "for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation." But the Bridegroom was ſoon taken away, and the heavens have received him, until the reſtitution of all things; for which the church upon earth at this day waiteth and prayeth; that ſhe may be delivered from all her troubles, and inſeparably united to him in whom ſhe delighteth. Every individual, when oppreſſed by ſin and ſorrow, may make his ſupplication in the ſame words, for that ſalvation, which is by grace, through faith.

82. *Mine*

82. *Mine eyes fail for thy word, ſaying, when wilt thou comfort me.*

While the promiſed ſalvation is delayed, the afflicted ſoul thinketh every day a year, and looketh toward heaven for the accompliſhment of God's word, ſaying to "her Friend and her Beloved, when "wilt thou comfort me! Come, Lord Jeſu, come "quickly!*"

83. *For I am become like a bottle in the ſmoke; yet do I not forget thy ſtatutes.*

"Bottles" among the Jews, were made of ſkins. One of theſe, if expoſed to heat and "ſmoke," would become ſhrivelled and uſeleſs. Such a change will labour and ſorrow cauſe in the human frame; and the Pſalmiſt here complaineth, that his beauty and his ſtrength were gone; the natural moiſture was dried up; in conſequence of which, the ſkin ſhrivelled, and both colour and vigour departed from him. Diſeaſe and old age will produce the ſame ſad effects in us all; but the body's weakneſs is the ſoul's ſtrength;

* "Defecerunt oculi mei:" Ambroſius: "Nonne quandò "aliquem deſideramus et ſperamus adfore, eò dirigimus oculos "unde ſperamus eſſe venturum? Sic teneræ uxor ætatis, de "ſpeculâ litorali, indefeſſâ expectatione conjugis præſtolatur "adventum; ut quamcunque navim viderit, illic putat conju-"gem navigare, metuatque ne videndi gratiâ dilecti, alius an-"tevertat, nec ipſa poſſit prima dicere, video te, mi marite." Vide reliqua apud Ambroſium, ejuſdem planè ſpiritûs, nec tamen potui temperare, quin hæc exſcriberem. Sic affectus eſt quiſquis cum Paulo diſſolvi cupit, et eſſe cum Chriſto. Sic denique qui ſemel guſtato bono Dei verbo, ut idem Paulus ait, ſibi poſtea relictus, deficit tædio ſui, ac reddi ſibi poſtulat præguſtatam ſuaviſſimi amoris dulcedinem. BOSSUET.

as

as the outward man decayeth, the inward man is renewed; "I do not forget thy ſtatutes."

84. *How many* are *the days of thy ſervant? When wilt thou execute judgment on them that perſecute me?*

The well beloved John heard a queſtion, of the ſame import with this, aſked by the ſpirits of the martyrs, that had left their bodies, and were waiting, in the ſeparate ſtate, for the day of retribution. The anſwer, which was made to them, may likewiſe ſatisfy our impatience, when ſuffering affliction and perſecution. "I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of "them that were ſlain for the word of God, and for "the teſtimony which they held. And they cried "with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, "holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge "our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And "white robes were given unto every one of them, "and it was ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt "yet for a little ſeaſon, until their fellow-ſervants "alſo, and their brethren, that ſhould be killed as "they were, ſhould be fulfilled." Rev. vi. 9, &c.

85. *The proud have digged pits for me, which* are *not after thy law.*

The manner of taking wild beaſts was by "digging pits," and covering them over with turf, upon which when the beaſt trod, he fell into the pit, and was there confined and taken. But there was a "law," that if a pit were left open, and a tame beaſt, an ox, or an aſs, fell into it, the owners of the pit ſhould make good the damage. Exod. xxi. 31. Much more ſhall men be called to a ſevere account, who purpoſely lay ſnares and ſtumbling blocks before

before the feet of their innocent brethren, to cauſe them to fall and periſh.

86. *All thy commandments are faithful: they perſecute me wrongfully; help thou me.*

Man is perfidious and deceitful, God is "faithful" and true; he hath promiſed to "help" thoſe who ſuffer "wrongfully," and he will, in the end, ſhew himſelf to be the avenger of all ſuch. Let them wait with patience, ſince the King of Righteouſneſs himſelf ſuffered as a malefactor, before he entered into his glory.

87. *They had almoſt conſumed me upon earth; but I forſook not thy precepts.*

However low the church, or any member thereof, may, by perſecution and tribulation, be brought upon earth, yet nothing can ſeparate them from the love of God, while they "forſake not his precepts," nor diſbelieve his promiſes. The ſoul, we know, muſt forſake the body; but God will forſake neither.

88. *Quicken me after thy loving kindneſs, ſo ſhall I keep the teſtimony of thy mouth.*

Through the "loving kindneſs" of God our Saviour, the Spirit of life is given unto us, by whoſe "quickening" influences we are revived, when ſunk in ſins, or in ſorrows, and are enabled with joy and gladneſs, to perſevere in "keeping the teſtimony of "his mouth."

LAMED. PART XII.

89. *For ever, O* LORD, *thy word is ſettled in heaven*: or, *Thou art for ever, O* LORD, *thy word is*

ſettled in heaven: 90. *Thy faithfulneſs is unto all generations: thou haſt eſtabliſhed the earth, and it abideth.* 91. *They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy ſervants.*

The eternity of Jehovah, and the immutability of his counſels, are conſiderations which afford comfort and encouragement to his people, when their enemies are in arms againſt them. Even in this world, the unwearied "heavens" continue to perform invariably their operations upon themſelves and the bodies placed in them; while the globe of the "earth" retaining it's original form and coherence of parts, ſtill, as at the beginning, ſupports and maintains the ſucceſſive "generations" of men, which live and move upon it, to whom the faithful promiſes of God are fulfilled, from age to age. Thus doth the unchangeable order of nature itſelf point out to us the truth of her great author, and at the ſame time reprove the eccentric motions of rebellious man. The heavens and the earth "continue this day according to thine "ordinance," O Lord, "for all things are thy ſer-"vants;" all invariably ſerve thee, except man, who alone was endowed with reaſon, that he might obey and glorify thee, in this life, and that which is to come!

92. *Unleſs thy law* had been *my delights, I ſhould then have periſhed in mine affliction.*

The Pſalmiſt aſſureth us, from his own experience, how pleaſant and how profitable, in time of trouble, is the meditation on the fidelity of God, as diſplayed in the ſtability of his works. The "delights," by this afforded, ſuſtained his ſoul in "afflictions," which

which muſt otherwiſe have brought him to an end. And the ſame everlaſting Word ſhall be the believer's ſupport and conſolation, even when the heavens ſhall melt around him with fervent heat, and the earth, and all that is therein, ſhall be burnt up. "Heaven "and earth ſhall paſs away," ſaith He who made them, "but my word ſhall not paſs away."

93. *I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou haſt quickened me.*

Great are the neceſſities, and many the diſorders of the ſoul; but in the Scripture there is proviſion and medicine for them all; and according to our various wants and maladies, God relieveth and "quick-"eneth" us, ſometimes with one part of his word, ſometimes with another. Now, when we have found ourſelves thus benefited, at any time, by a particular paſſage of holy writ, we ſhould "never forget" but remember and treaſure it up in our minds, againſt a like occaſion, when the ſame affliction or temptation may again befall us.

94. *I am thine: ſave me, for I have ſought thy precepts.*

The double relation which we have the honour to bear to God, by creation, and by redemption, as the work of his hands, and the purchaſe of his blood, is a moſt endearing and prevailing argument with him, to "ſave" us from our enemies. But then let it be remembered, that no man can ſay to God with a good conſcience, "I am thine," unleſs he can alſo go on, and ſay, "I have ſought thy precepts," I deſire to ſerve and obey thee alone; ſince, after all, "his ſervants we are to whom we obey;" and if ſin

be our master, how can we say to a Master, whose interest is directly opposite, "I am thine?"

95. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies.*

In the preceding verse, David besought God to "save" him. The reason of that prayer is here assigned, namely, because "the wicked lay in wait "for him, to destroy him," as they afterward did to destroy one, whom the afflicted and persecuted Psalmist represented. Spiritual enemies are continually upon the watch to destroy us all; and we can no way escape their wiles, but by "considering," so as to understand and observe, God's "testimonies."

96. *I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

Of "all perfection" in this world, whether of beauty, wit, learning, pleasure, honour, or riches, experience will soon shew us the "end." But where is the end or boundary of the word of God? Who can ascend to the height of it's excellency; who can fathom the depth of it's mysteries; who can find out the comprehension of it's precepts, or conceive the extent of it's promises; who can take the dimensions of that love of God to man which it describeth, or that love of man to God which it teacheth! The knowledge of one thing leadeth us forward to that of another, and still, as we travel on, the prospect opens before us into eternity, like the pleasant and fruitful mountains of Canaan, rising on the other side of Jordan, when viewed by Moses from the top of Pisgah. O happy region of celestial wisdom, permanent felicity, true riches, and unfading glory; while

while we contemplate thee, how doth the world leſſen, and ſhrink to nothing, in our eyes! Thy bleſſings faith now beholdeth, but it is charity which ſhall hereafter poſſeſs and enjoy them!

MEM. PART XIII.

97. *O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.*

Words cannot expreſs the love which a pious mind entertaineth for the Scriptures. They are the epiſtle of God to mankind, offering reconciliation, peace, and union with himſelf in glory; containing reaſons why we ſhould love him and each other, with directions how to ſhew forth that love, which, as the Apoſtle ſaith, is "the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 10. On ſome portion of theſe Scriptures ſhould our "meditation" be continually, and "each day" ſhould add ſomething to our knowledge, to our faith, to our virtue.

98. *Thou through thy commandments haſt made me wiſer than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.* 99. *I have more underſtanding than all my teachers: for thy teſtimonies* are *my meditation.* 100. *I underſtand more than the ancients: becauſe I keep thy precepts.*

The "commandments" of God were "ever with" David; the "teſtimonies" of God were his "meditation;" and the "precepts" of God it was his care to "obſerve;" therefore his wiſdom exceeded the policy of his "enemies," the learning of his "teachers," and the experience of the "ancients." Thus, by the wiſdom of the Scriptures, did the holy

Jeſus, in the days of his fleſh, confound his adverſaries, aſtoniſh the teachers of the law, and inſtruct the aged. And it is the high prerogative of the Scriptures, at all times, to render youth and ſimplicity ſuperior to the inveterate malice and ſubtlety of the grand Deceiver, and his aſſociates.

101. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.*

The foundation of all religion muſt be laid in mortification and ſelf-denial; for ſince the will of fallen man is contrary to the will of God, we muſt abſtain from doing the one, in order to do the other. The affections may be ſtyled the "feet" of the ſoul, and unleſs theſe be "refrained from evil ways," no progreſs can be made in that way which alone is good and right; we cannot "keep God's word."

102. *I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou haſt taught me.*

Perſeverance is the effect of inſtruction from above, by the Spirit, through the Word: and our heavenly teacher differeth from all others, in this, that, with the leſſon, he beſtoweth on the ſcholar both a diſpoſition to learn, and an ability to perform.

103. *How ſweet are thy words unto my taſte!* yea *ſweeter than honey to my mouth.*

The ſoul hath it's "taſte," as well as the body, and that taſte is then in right order, when the "words" of Scripture are "ſweet" to the ſoul, as "honey" is to the mouth. If they are not always ſo, it is becauſe our taſte is vitiated by the world and the fleſh; and we ſhall ever find our reliſh for the word of God to be greateſt, when that for the world and the fleſh is leaſt,

leaſt, in time of affliction, ſickneſs, and death; for theſe are contrary one to the other. In heaven the latter will be no more, and therefore the former will be all in all.

104. *Through thy precepts I get underſtanding: therefore I hate every falſe way.*

He who delighteth to ſtudy the Scriptures, will "underſtand," from them, the true nature of righteouſneſs and of ſin; he who doth underſtand the nature of each, will love the former, and, in proportion, "hate" the latter; and with that which we thoroughly hate, we ſhall not bear to have any connection; with ſuſpicion and jealouſy we ſhall eye it approaching; with courage and conſtancy we ſhall arm, and fight againſt it; we ſhall make no peace, nor ſo much as a truce with it; but, as faithful ſoldiers and ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall aim at that utter extermination of it, which we have vowed, and which, through the Spirit of grace and power, will be accompliſhed, but not, perhaps, totally, till our life and warfare ſhall end together.

XXVI DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

NUN. PART XIV.

105. *Thy word* is *a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.*

Man is a traveller, his life is a journey, heaven is his end, his road lies through a wilderneſs, and he is in the dark. Thus circumſtanced, how earneſtly, and devoutly ought he to pray, "O ſend out thy

"light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them "bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles!" Pſ. xliii. 3. For ſurely, "the commandment is a "lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of in-"ſtruction are the way of life." Prov. vi. 23. The Word of God diſcovereth to us our errors; it ſheweth us where we loſt our way, and how we may recover it again. If we take this "lamp" in our hand, it will not only point out our courſe in general, but alſo direct us in every ſtep, and guide our "feet" aright in the "path" of holineſs and peace. Thus, through the devious and lonely wilds of Arabia, was Iſrael once conducted to the land of promiſe, by the illuminating pillar, or rather by Him, whoſe preſence dwelt in the midſt of it.

106. *I have ſworn, and I will perform* it, *that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*

Such being the direction afforded by the Word of God to a benighted pilgrim, David had obliged himſelf, in the moſt ſolemn manner, to follow that direction. Every chriſtian doth, at his baptiſm, in like manner, "promiſe and vow to keep God's command-"ments, and to walk in the ſame all the days of his "life." The nature and extent of theſe engagements muſt be interpreted according to the covenant of grace, under which they are made. The command to us ſinners is, that we ſhould repent, and believe in him, who will pardon our failings, and ſtrengthen our infirmities, that we may walk as becometh his diſciples, who, though they ought not to commit ſin, may yet, by divine grace, be reſtored and ſaved from it. "Theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not.

"And

"And if any man ſin, we have an advocate with the "Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous; and he is the "propitiation for our ſins." 1 John ii. 1.

107. *I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O* LORD, *according to thy word.*

The faithful ſervants of God may be "afflicted;" they may be "very much" and grievouſly afflicted; but let them conſider, that, by afflictions, their corruptions are purged away, their faith is tried, their patience perfected, their brethren are edified, and their Maſter is glorified. Let them ſtill firmly rely on the divine promiſe of grace and ſalvation; ſtill humbly pray for it's accompliſhment in themſelves; "quicken me, O LORD, according to thy word."

108. *Accept, I beſeech thee, the free will offerings of my mouth, O* LORD, *and teach me thy judgments.*

The "offerings" of the believer are prayer, praiſe, and holy reſolutions and vows, like that of the Pſalmiſt above, "to keep God's righteous judgments," in which he therefore petitioneth to be every day more and more "taught" and inſtructed by the Spirit of truth. Chriſtians are called by St. Peter, "a "royal and holy prieſthood, appointed to offer up "ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jeſus "Chriſt." 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9.

109. *My ſoul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.*

To have one's "ſoul," נפשׁ or life, "in one's "hand," is a phraſe often uſed in Scripture, and implieth going in continual danger of one's life. See Judg. xii. 3. 1 Sam. xix. 5. and xxviii. 21. Job xiii. 14. Great and inceſſant as David's perils were,

he

he did not "forget" God's promiſes, nor his precepts, but truſted in the former, and performed the latter. St. Paul knew, that "in every city bonds and af-"flictions waited for him; but none of theſe things," ſaith he, "move me, neither count I my life dear "unto myſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with "joy." Acts xx. 23.

110. *The wicked have laid a ſnare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.*

When open violence fails to move a man from his ſtedfaſtneſs, "the wicked will lay ſnares" for him, to intice him into ſin by the baits of honour, pleaſure, or profit; by expoſing him to unavoidable temptations, as when David was driven out of his own land, to live amongſt idolaters, of which uſage he complaineth; 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. or elſe by making laws which an honeſt man cannot obey without ſin, or refuſe to obey without danger. Numberleſs are the traps, of one kind or other, which human wit, and diabolical malice, in conjunction, have ſet for the conſciences of thoſe, who profeſs themſelves to be the ſervants of God; and happy is that ſervant, whom they have not cauſed to "err from the precepts" of his Maſter.

111. *Thy teſtimonies have I taken as mine heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.*

The "teſtimonies" of God's will, his word and his ſacraments, are the bonds and the deeds, by which we hold our heavenly "inheritance, as heirs of God, "and joint heirs with Chriſt." Of theſe deeds, and this inheritance, no power can deprive us; and when "they are the rejoicing of our hearts," we ſhall not, by preferring an earthly inheritance, deprive ourſelves of them.

112. *I*

112. *I have inclined mine heart to perform thy ſtatutes always*, even unto *the end.*

The "inclination of the heart" to good, is the work of God; but man is, nevertheleſs, in this, as in other inſtances, ſaid to perform it, when he liſtens to the call, and obeys the motions of his grace. We are not to judge of ourſelves by what we ſometimes ſay and do, but by the general diſpoſition and tendency of the heart and it's affections. When, after repeated trials, we find that the love of God caſts the ſcale againſt the love of the world; when it is our glory, our delight, our treaſure, our meat and drink, to do his will, and, againſt all oppoſition, to perſevere in doing it, "even unto the end;" then are we the true diſciples of that Maſter, whoſe heart was evermore inclined to good; who alone performed a perfect and ſpotleſs obedience, and perſiſted in working the work of him that ſent him, until, with his laſt breath, he declared, upon the croſs, IT IS FINISHED.

SAMECH. PART XV.

113. *I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.*

"Love and hatred" are the two great and influencing affections of the human mind. Since the fall, they have been miſplaced. By nature we "love "vain thoughts," and "hate the law of God. The "carnal mind is enmity againſt God, for it is not "ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 7. But in a renewed mind the caſe is altered; it's delight is in the law of God, and there-

fore

fore it cannot bear "vain thoughts," which are contrary to that law, and exalt themſelves againſt it. Thoughts are often ſaid to be free; from human cenſure they are, but not from the cognizance and judgment of the Omniſcient. The mind ſhould be well furniſhed with proper materials, on which to employ itſelf. We ſhall then be ſecured againſt the incurſions of rambling, conceited, worldly, impure, and revengeful thoughts, which otherwiſe will devour half our time, and appear againſt us, to our unſpeakable amazement, in that day, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be revealed.

114. *Thou art my hiding-place, and my ſhield: I hope in thy word.*

From vain thoughts, and vain perſons, the Pſalmiſt teacheth us to fly, by prayer, to God, as our refuge and protector. This courſe a believer will as naturally take, in the hour of temptation and danger, as the offspring of the hen, on perceiving a bird of prey hovering over their heads, retire to their "hiding-place," under the wings of their dam; or as the warrior oppoſeth his "ſhield" to the darts which are aimed at him.

115. *Depart from me, ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.*

Safe under the protection of the Almighty, David bids the wicked "depart from him; he neither fears their malice, nor will follow their counſels, being reſolutely determined to adhere to his duty, and to "keep the commandments of his God." He who hath formed David's reſolution, muſt, like him, diſclaim and renounce the ſociety of "evil doers;"

for

for every man will insensibly contract the good or bad qualities of the company which he keeps; and should, therefore, be careful to keep such, as will make him wiser and better, and fit him for the goodly fellowship of saints and angels.

116. *Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.* 117. *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.*

A resolution to fly from evil, and to do good, is properly followed by an earnest and repeated prayer, to be "upheld" in the performance of it, by divine grace, "according to God's word" and promise; that so our "hope" in that word may not fail, and put us to "shame" before our enemies; that we may be "saved" from falling, and enabled, in our walking, to "have respect unto the divine statutes con-"tinually." How necessary is this prayer to be made by creatures, whose tempers and dispositions are ever varying; who have so many and so formidable adversaries to contend with; and on whom their temporal condition hath so much influence!

118. *Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.*

The dreadful judgments which God, from time to time, in all ages of the world, hath executed, and which he still can, and will execute, upon impenitent sinners, afford a kind admonition and a powerful motive to obedience. As no force can counteract the power of God, so no "cunning" can deceive his wisdom, but will always, in the end, miserably "deceive" those who trust in it, and employ it against

againſt the counſels of heaven; "their deceit, or "ſubtlety, is falſhood," שקר it will fail and ruin it's owners. Of this, hiſtory furniſheth inſtances in abundance. And it will be evident to all the world, when ſimplicity and innocence ſhall reign triumphant, with the Lamb, on mount Sion; and deceit and guile ſhall have their portion with the Serpent, in the lake of fire.

119. *Thou putteſt away all the ungodly of the earth like droſs: therefore I love thy teſtimonies.*

"Ungodly" men and hypocrites are mingled among the ſons and ſervants of God, as "droſs" is blended with the pure metal, and appeareth to be part of it. But the fiery trial of divine judgment ſoon diſcovereth the difference. The falſe pretences of the hypocrite are detected, and the glory of the wicked vaniſheth away. Theſe diſpenſations of God's Providence increaſe our "love" of his "word;" becauſe they give us ſenſible experience of it's truth, they ſhew us the juſtice of God in puniſhing others, together with his mercy in ſparing us, and removing thoſe who might have corrupted us, and turned the ſilver itſelf into droſs. In times of viſitation, Chriſt ſitteth among his people "as a refiner and purifier "of ſilver," purging away all droſs, that out of what remains may be made "veſſels of honour, meet "for the Maſter's uſe," to ſerve and to adorn the ſanctuary. See Mal. iii. 3. Iſai. i. 25. 2 Tim. ii. 21.

120. *My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.*

At the preſence of Jehovah, when he appeareth in judgment, the earth trembleth and is ſtill. His beſt

beſt ſervants are not exempted from an awful dread, upon ſuch occaſions; ſcenes of this kind, ſhewn in viſion to the prophets, cauſe their fleſh to quiver, and all their bones to ſhake. Encompaſſed with a frail body, and a ſinful world, we ſtand in need of every poſſible tie; and the affections both of fear and love muſt be employed, to reſtrain us from tranſgreſſion; we muſt, at the ſame time, "love "God's teſtimonies, and fear his judgments."

AIN. PART XVI.

121. *I have done judgment and juſtice: leave me not to mine oppreſſors.*

He who is engaged in a righteous cauſe, and hath acted uprightly in the ſupport of it, may, ſo far, without incurring the cenſure of boaſting, or truſting in his own righteouſneſs, make David's plea, "I have done judgment and juſtice;" as if he had ſaid, Thou, O my God, knoweſt that I am innocent of the crimes whereof my implacable enemies accuſe me, and that I have done no wrong to thoſe who ſeek to take away my life; deliver not thine injured ſervant, therefore, into their hands; "leave me not "to mine oppreſſors." The Son of David might uſe the words in their full and abſolute ſenſe, and plead for a glorious reſurrection, on the foot of his having performed a perfect obedience to the law.

122. *Be ſurety to thy ſervant for good: let not the proud oppreſs me.*

The Pſalmiſt, finding himſelf ready to be ſeized by his inſolent adverſaries, like a helpleſs and inſol-

vent

went debtor, intreateth the Almighty to appear in his defence, to take the matter into his own hands, to interpose, and plead his cause, as his surety and advocate, in the day of trouble. Good Hezekiah uses the same word in the same sense, speaking of the time when death was about to make his claim upon the mortal part of him; "O Lord, I am oppressed, ערבנ undertake, be surety for me." Isai. xxxviii. 14. Happy the creatures, whose Creator is their surety, and hath interposed to rescue them from those great oppressors, sin, death, and Satan!

123. *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.*

Salvation, whether temporal, or spiritual, may be delayed; the "eyes" of the sufferer may "fail" with looking upward, and his earnest expectation may be ready to break forth, in the words of Sisera's mother, "Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why "tarry the wheels of his chariot?" But what saith God, by his Prophets and Apostles? "though it "tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come." Hab. ii. 3. "Yet a little while, and he that shall "come, will come." Heb. x. 37. The "word" which hath promised it, is the word of truth, faithfulness, and "righteousness;" the attributes of God are engaged for it's accomplishment, and he cannot deny himself.

124. *Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.* 125. *I am thy servant, give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.*

The consideration, that we are the "servants" of God, if indeed we are so, will always be successfully urged

urged to the beſt of maſters, as an argument why he ſhould "deal with us according to his mercy," in the pardoning of our offences; "teach us his ſtatutes," that we may know and do his will; and inſtruct us in his "teſtimonies," that we may believe aright concerning him.

126. It is *time for* thee, LORD, *to work:* for *they have made void thy law.*

The "law" of God is "made void" by thoſe who deny it's authority, or it's obligation; by thoſe who render it of none effect through their traditions, or their lives. When a deluge of wickedneſs and impiety, entering at theſe gates, hath overwhelmed a land, "it is time for the Lord to work;" the great lawgiver will then exert his power, and vindicate his authority ſpeedily. There is a certain meaſure of iniquity, which when communities, or individuals, reſpectively, have filled up, the deſtroying angel comes forth, and executes his commiſſion. How ought a man to fear, leſt the next ſin he commits ſhould fill up his meaſure, and ſeal his eternal doom!

127. *Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.*

As the wickedneſs of thoſe increaſeth, who "make "void the divine law," the zeal and "love" of believers ſhould increaſe in proportion, to ſtem the torrent; and this may be done, to a ſurpriſing degree, by a few perſons, who, after the example of the firſt Chriſtians, can forſake all, to follow their Maſter; who have the ſenſe and the courage to prefer truth, wiſdom, holineſs, and heaven, to falſhood, folly, ſin, and the world; who can reſolutely reject the glit-

ing temptation, and ſay, without hypocriſy, to their God, "I love thy commandments above gold, yea, "above fine gold."

128. *Therefore I eſteem all* thy *precepts*, concerning *all* things to be *right*; or, *Therefore all thy precepts, even all have I approved*; and *I hate every falſe way.*

For the ſame reaſon that the children of God, in the worſt of times, "love his commandments," they love them "all," not obſerving ſuch only as they can obſerve without giving offence, but regardleſs of the cenſures of the world, doing their duty in every particular; not "hating" ſome "evil ways," and at the ſame time, walking in others, but extending and manifeſting their averſion to all alike. Of ſuch perſons it is evident, that they make a conſcience of their doings, and their conduct appears to be uniform; the adverſary will have no evil thing to ſay of them; they will do real ſervice to the cauſe which they maintain; and, after having honoured their Maſter before men, they will by him be honoured before men and angels.

P E. PART XVII.

129. *Thy teſtimonies* are *wonderful: therefore doth my ſoul keep*, or *obſerve them.*

The Scriptures are "wonderful," with reſpect to the matter which they contain, the manner in which they are written, and the effects which they produce. They contain the ſublimeſt ſpiritual truths, veiled under external ceremonies and ſacraments, figurative deſcriptions, typical hiſtories, parables, ſimilitudes, &c. When properly opened and enforced, they terrify

rify and humble, they convert and transform, they conſole and ſtrengthen. Who but muſt delight to ſtudy and to "obſerve" theſe "teſtimonies" of the will and the wiſdom, the love and the power of God moſt high! While we have theſe holy writings, let us not waſte our time, miſemploy our thoughts, and proſtitute our admiration, by doating on human follies, and wondering at human trifles.

130. *The entrance of thy words giveth light: it giveth underſtanding to the ſimple.*

The Scriptures are the appointed means of "enlightening" the mind with true and ſaving knowledge. They ſhew us what we were, what we are, and what we ſhall be; they ſhew us what God hath done for us, and what he expecteth us to do for him; they ſhew us the adverſaries we have to encounter, and how to encounter them with ſucceſs; they ſhew us the mercy and the juſtice of the Lord, the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell. Thus will they "give to the ſimple," in a few days, "an "underſtanding" of thoſe matters, which philoſophy, for whole centuries, ſought in vain.

131. *I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.*

An eaſtern traveller, fatigued through toil, and parched by heat, doth not, with more vehement deſire, gaſp for the cooling breeze, than the ſervant of God, in time of temptation and trouble, "panteth" after that Spirit of refreſhment and conſolation, which breathes in the Scriptures of truth. The affections are the ſprings of human actions; no arguments are needful to impel, and no difficulties are ſufficient to

retard the man, who is in purſuit of an object, which, with all his heart, he loves, and "longs for." How happy is it, when heaven, inſtead of earth, is that object!

132. *Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou uſeſt to do unto thoſe that love thy name.*

A child of God is never ſo much afflicted, as when his heavenly Father ſeemeth, for a time, to have turned away his face from him. All leſſer troubles vaniſh, when God doth but vouchſafe a "look" of paternal compaſſion. And ſince the love of Jehovah to his people is unchangeable as his nature, mercies formerly ſhewn to others are moſt forcibly urged by the Pſalmiſt, in his petition for the like; "Be mer-"ciful unto me, as thou uſeſt to do unto thoſe that "love thy name."

133. *Order my ſteps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*

By the inſtruction of his "word," God bringeth us into the way of life; by the aids of his grace he "directeth" and "ſupporteth" our "ſteps" in that way, enabling us, as we proceed, to overcome the ſins which do beſet us, ſo that they prevail not to turn us back, or to make us deſiſt from travelling toward the city of our eternal habitation.

134. *Deliver me from the oppreſſion of man: ſo will I keep thy precepts.*

He truly loveth God, who requeſteth "deliver-"ance" from "oppreſſion" and perſecution, that he may again enjoy the opportunities of "keeping his "precepts," and of ſerving him without diſtraction. And gratitude for his deliverance will be, with ſuch

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an one, an additional reaſon for uſing thoſe opportunities, when they are reſtored, to the beſt advantage.

135. *Make thy face to ſhine upon thy ſervant; and teach me thy ſtatutes.*

The ſame ſentiment is again expreſſed in different language. The Pſalmiſt prayeth for a return of the divine favour, and for better days, that in peace and tranquility he may learn and do the will of God. Tribulation is a dark and tempeſtuous night; but Jehovah cauſeth "his face to ſhine" upon his people, and the effects are like thoſe produced by the ſun at his riſing, when univerſal nature revives and rejoices, and clouds and darkneſs fly away.

136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, becauſe they keep not thy law.*

David, who, through this whole Pſalm, ſo often and ſo ardently beſeecheth God to "teach him his "ſtatutes," declareth, in this verſe, his continual grief of heart, occaſioned by ſeeing others break thoſe ſtatutes. Thus Lot, among the Sodomites, was "vexed "from day to day," not ſo much at their uſage of himſelf, as at "ſeeing and hearing their unlawful "deeds." 2 Pet. ii. 8. Thus Jeremiah telleth the ungodly of his time, "If ye will not hear, my ſoul "ſhall weep in ſecret places for your pride; and mine "eyes ſhall weep ſore, and run down with tears." Jer. xiii. 17. Thus the holy Jeſus "looked round "about on the Phariſees, being grieved for the "hardneſs of their hearts;" Mark iii. 5. and "wept "over" a city which had always perſecuted, and was then about to crucify him, becauſe it "knew not

"the things which belonged to it's peace." Luke xix. 41. Accept, O Lord, the tears which our bleſſed Redeemer ſhed, in the days of his fleſh, for us, who ſhould, but alas, too often, cannot weep for our brethren, or for ourſelves; and give us, at leaſt, the grace of holy mourning, which in thy ſight is of great price.

TZADDI. PART XVIII.

137. *Righteous* art *thou*, O LORD, *and upright* are *thy judgments.*

This portion of our pſalm is employed in celebrating the righteouſneſs of God, manifeſted to us by his word, and by his diſpenſations, which that word both recordeth and explaineth. It is ſaid of the emperor Mauritius, that upon ſeeing all his children ſlain before his face, at the command of that bloody tyrant and uſurper, Phocas, himſelf expecting the next ſtroke, with a philoſophy truly divine, he exclaimed aloud, in theſe words of David, "Righteous art thou, O "Lord, and upright are thy judgments."* By faith he was aſſured of this great truth, and nobly confeſſed it, notwithſtanding all appearances to the contrary. The laſt day will demonſtrate the ſame thing to the whole world, and open the mouths of men and angels to declare, concerning all the divine proceedings, what the good Mauritius acknowledged, at the time, with regard to the murder of his children.

138. *Thy teſtimonies*, that *thou haſt commanded*, are *righteous and very faithful.*

* Baron. Annal. ad Ann. 602.

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The revelations of God's will are "righteouſneſs" and "truth;" his commands are juſt, and ought to be obeyed; his promiſes and his threatenings will infallibly come to paſs, and deſerve above all things to be regarded.

139. *My zeal hath conſumed me; becauſe mine enemies have forgotten thy words.*

"Zeal" is a high degree of love; and when the object of that love is ill treated, it venteth itſelf in a mixture of grief and indignation, which are ſufficient to wear and "conſume" the heart. This will be the caſe, where men rightly conceive of that diſhonour, which is continually done to God, by creatures whom he hath made and redeemed. But never could the verſe be uttered, with ſuch fulneſs of truth and propriety, by any one, as by the Son of God, who had ſuch a ſenſe of his Father's glory, and of man's ſin, as no perſon elſe ever had. And, accordingly, when his zeal had exerted itſelf in purging the temple, St. John tells us, "his diſciples remembered "that it was written, The zeal of thine houſe hath "eaten me up." The place where it is ſo written, is Pſal. lxix. 9. and the paſſage is exactly parallel to this before us.

140. *Thy word* is *very pure: therefore thy ſervant loveth it.*

"Thy word is very pure;" in the original, "tried, "refined, purified, like gold in the furnace," abſolutely perfect, without the droſs of vanity and fallibility, which runs through human writings. The more we try the promiſes, the ſurer we ſhall find

them.* This pure word hath likewiſe in it a power of purifying us. It containeth precepts and examples of purity, helps and encouragements to purity, and the Spirit of purity goeth with it, and worketh by it. "Therefore thy ſervant loveth it;" and no one, but a true ſervant of God, can "therefore" love it, becauſe it is pure; ſince he who loves it muſt deſire to be like it, to feel it's efficacy, to be reformed by it, and conformed to it.

141. *I am ſmall and deſpiſed:* yet *do not I forget thy precepts.*

Faithfulneſs to God will often reduce men to ſtraights, and bring upon them the contempt of the world; happy are they, who, under theſe difficulties and diſcouragements, "forget not his precepts," but ſtill continue faithful, looking unto Jeſus, who once "endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is now "ſet down at the right hand of God." Heb. xii. 2.

142. *Thy righteouſneſs* is *an everlaſting righteouſneſs, and thy law* is *the truth.*

Men may decree wickedneſs by a law, or they may change their decrees, and, with them, what was right to-day, may be wrong to-morrow. But the law of God is "righteouſneſs," and it is "truth," to-day and for ever. His juſtice, goodneſs, and fidelity, are unchangeable; he will never forſake us, unleſs we forſake him, but will remember us in our loweſt eſtate, if, in that eſtate, we "do not forget his pre-"cepts."

* Pure Gold is ſo fixed, that Boerhaave informs us of an ounce of it ſet in the eye of a glaſs furnace for two months, without loſing a ſingle grain.

143. *Trouble*

143. *Trouble and anguiſh have taken hold upon*, or, *have found me:* yet *thy commandments* are *my delights.*

We need not take pains, as many do, "to find "trouble and anguiſh," for they will, one day, "find "us." In that day, the revelations of God muſt be to us inſtead of all worldly "delights" and pleaſures, which will then have forſaken us; and how forlorn and deſolate will be our ſtate, if we ſhall have no other delights, no other pleaſures, to ſucceed them, and to accompany us into eternity! Let our ſtudy be now in the Scriptures, if we expect our comfort from them, in time to come.

144. *The righteouſneſs of thy teſtimonies* is *everlaſting: give me underſtanding, and I ſhall live.*

In every ſenſe, O Lord Jeſu, thy righteouſneſs is "everlaſting:" Grant us the "underſtanding" of it, in every ſenſe, and we "ſhall live," in thee now, and with thee for ever.

XXVI DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

KOPH. PART XIX.

145. *I cried with* my *whole heart; hear me*, O LORD: *I will keep thy ſtatutes.* 146. *I cried unto thee; ſave me, and I ſhall keep thy teſtimonies.*

Believers, in time of affliction, make their prayer to God with fervour and importunity, petitioning for deliverance, that they may the better ſerve their Deliverer, and keep his laws.

147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried;*

cried: I hoped in thy word. 148. *Mine eyes prevent the* night *watches, that I might meditate in thy word.*

It is a certain ſign that our hearts are ſet upon a work, when the thoughts of it cauſe ſleep to depart from us, and we awake readily, conſtantly, and early, to the performance of it. David delighted in the holy exerciſes of prayer and meditation; therefore he "prevented the dawning of the morning," and was beforehand with the light itſelf; therefore his "eyes prevented the watches," that is, the laſt of thoſe watches, into which the night was by the Jews divided; he needed not the watchman's call, but was ſtirring before it could be given. Climate and conſtitution will, doubtleſs, make a difference, and claim conſiderable allowance; but by Chriſtians, who enjoy their health, in temperate weather, the ſun ſhould not be ſuffered to ſhine in vain, nor the golden hours of the morning to glide away unimproved; ſince of David's Lord, as well as of David, it is ſaid, "in the morning riſing up, a great while before "day, he went out and departed into a ſolitary place, "and there prayed." Mark i. 35.

149. *Hear my voice, according unto thy loving kindneſs: O* LORD, *quicken me according to thy judgment*; that is, *thy word.* 150. *They draw nigh that follow after miſchief: they are far from thy law.* 151. *Thou* art *near, O* LORD; *and all thy commandments* are *truth.*

If our enemies "draw nigh" to deſtroy us, God is ſtill "nearer" to preſerve us; and however his "word" may be rejected by the wicked, the faithful always find it to be "true," to their great and endleſs comfort.

152. *Con-*

152. *Concerning thy teſtimonies, I have known of old, that thou haſt founded them for ever.*

This portion of our Pſalm endeth with the triumph of faith over all dangers and temptations. "Concerning thy teſtimonies," the revelations of thy will, thy counſels for the ſalvation of thy ſervants, "I have known of old," by faith, and by my own experience, as well as that of others, "that thou "haſt founded them for ever," they are unalterable and everlaſting as the attributes of their great author, and can never fail thoſe who rely upon them, in time, or in eternity.

RESH. PART XX.

153. *Conſider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.*

It is happy when our "afflictions" do not make us to "forget the law of God;" then have we confidence toward him in our prayers, that he will "conſider" and regard our ſufferings, as he did thoſe of Iſrael in Egypt, and come down to "deliver" us out of all our troubles; for Iſrael is ſtill in Egypt, while the church is in the world; but let us remember the promiſe, and rejoice in hope.

154. *Plead my cauſe, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.*

God is the Patron of his people, to "plead" their "cauſe;" their Redeemer, to "deliver" them out of troubles; the author and fountain of their life, to "quicken" and ſupport them. We may, therefore, have recourſe to him at all times, as an Advocate, a Saviour, and a Comforter, for the defence of

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our cauſe, the deliverance of our perſons, and the ſupport of our hearts. And all this, "according to "his word," in which he hath engaged thus to patronize, to reſcue, and to ſtrengthen thoſe who truſt in him, and apply to him.

155. *Salvation* is *far from the wicked: for they ſeek not thy ſtatutes.*

The "ſalvation" which is nigh the faithful, becauſe they diligently and earneſtly ſeek to know and to do the will of God revealed to them in his word, is "far from the wicked," becauſe they "ſeek not "his ſtatutes," nor concern themſelves to know what they are, much leſs to obſerve and practiſe them.

156. *Great* are *thy tender mercies, O* LORD: *quicken me according to thy judgments*, that is, *thy word.* 157. *Many* are *my perſecutors, and mine enemies:* yet *do I not decline from thy teſtimonies.* 158. *I beheld the tranſgreſſors, and was grieved; becauſe they kept not thy word.*

Perſecution tempteth men to apoſtaſy, and is the great trial of our fidelity to God and to his word. He who, in ſuch circumſtances, forgetteth his own ſufferings, to commiſerate the ſin and folly of his perſecutors, is a true follower, as David was a forerunner of Jeſus Chriſt.

159. *Conſider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O* LORD, *according to thy loving kindneſs.* 160. *Thy word* is *true* from *the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments* endureth *for ever.*

It is obſervable how the Pſalmiſt delighteth to dwell on theſe two ſweet notes; the "loving kind-"neſs" of God in promiſing ſalvation, and his "truth" in the conſtant performance of that promiſe to his church,

church, while ſhe "loves" and adheres to his "pre-"cepts." Thus it hath been "from the beginning," and thus it will be, until the whole counſel of heaven ſhall at length be fulfilled, by the reſurrection and ſalvation of the juſt.

SCHIN. PART XXI.

161. *Princes have perſecuted me without a cauſe: but my heart ſtandeth in awe of thy word.* 162. *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great ſpoil.*

David was "perſecuted" by Saul and his aſſociates, "without a cauſe." The life of Saul was ſpared by him, becauſe he "ſtood in awe of God's "word," and preferred the comfortable reflection, of having obeyed it's injunctions, to all the "ſpoil," and to thoſe many advantages, that would have accrued to him, by the overthrow and death of his implacable adverſary, who acknowledged, upon the occaſion, "Thou art more righteous than I." 1 Sam. xxiv. 17. The ſufferings of the body are ſoon over; the joys of conſcience have no end.

163. *I hate and abhor lying:* but *thy law do I* love.

The word of truth is the proper object of our "love," and every thing which is contrary to it deſerveth our "hatred and abhorrence;" nor is life itſelf worth preſerving, at the expence either of our faith, or our virtue.

164. *Seven times a day do I praiſe thee, becauſe of thy righteous judgments.*

They who, like David, during the time of perſecution and affliction, put their truſt in God, and wait his deciſion of their cauſe, will always find reaſon, as David did, to "praiſe him ſeven times a day," or conti-

continually, for his juſt decrees and "righteous "judgments" concerning them.

165. *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing ſhall offend them.*

Amidſt the ſtorms and tempeſts of the world, there is a perfect calm in the breaſts of thoſe, who not only do the will of God, but "love" to do it. They are at peace with God, by the blood of reconciliation; at peace with themſelves, by the anſwer of a good conſcience, and the ſubjection of thoſe deſires which war againſt the ſoul; at peace with all men, by the Spirit of charity; and the whole creation is ſo at peace with them, that all things work together for their good. No external troubles can rob them of this "great peace," no "offences" or ſtumbling blocks, which are thrown in their way by perſecution, or temptation, by the malice of enemies, or the apoſtaſy of friends, by any thing which they ſee, hear of, or feel, can detain, or divert them from their courſe. Heavenly love ſurmounts every obſtacle, and runs with delight the way of God's commandments.

166. LORD, *I have hoped for thy ſalvation, and done thy commandments.*

This is the true poſture of a Chriſtian, in which he need not fear to be found by his laſt and great enemy, Death, "doing" his duty, and "hoping" for ſalvation from the perſon, who is his Maſter, as well as his Redeemer, and who, conſequently, expecteth to be obeyed, no leſs than to be believed in.

167. *My ſoul hath kept thy teſtimonies, and loved them exceedingly.* 168. *I have kept thy precepts and teſtimonies: for all my ways* are *before thee.*

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"The "love of God's teſtimonies," and the conſideration, that all "our ways are before him," and ſubject to his immediate inſpection, are two powerful motives to obedience. The plea of having "kept "the divine precepts," &c. in the mouth of David, or any other believer, intendeth ſincerity, not perfection, and is alledged as an evidence of grace, not as a claim of merit. Chriſt alone kept the old law, and he enableth us to obſerve the new.

TAU. PART XXII.

169. *Let my cry come near before thee, O* LORD: *give me underſtanding according to thy word.* 170. *Let my ſupplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.*

The Pſalmiſt ſtill continueth inſtant in prayer for "underſtanding," to direct him in the midſt of dangers and temptations, and for "deliverance" out of them all, when God ſhall ſee fit to accompliſh the promiſes made in his "word." Theſe are bleſſings, for which a man cannot be too frequent, or too earneſt, in his petitions to the throne of heaven.

171. *My lips ſhall utter praiſe, when thou haſt taught me thy ſtatutes.* 172. *My tongue ſhall ſpeak of thy word: for all thy commandments* are *righteouſneſs.*

He who obtaineth his requeſts, and is made a partaker of that grace and ſalvation, for which he ſo fervently prayed, will edify men, by ſinging the "praiſes," and proclaiming the "righteouſneſs" of God his Saviour.

173. *Let thine hand help me: for I have choſen thy precepts.* 174. *I have longed for thy ſalvation, O* LORD: *and thy law* is *my delight,*

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"Salvation" by the "Hand, or Arm of Jehovah," (which is often in Scripture a title of Meſſiah) hath been the object of the hopes, the deſires, and "long-"ing" expectation of the faithful, from Adam to this hour; and will continue ſo to be, until He, who hath already viſited us in great humility, ſhall come again in glorious majeſty, to compleat our redemption, and take us to himſelf.

175. *Let my ſoul live, and it ſhall praiſe thee; and let thy judgments help me.*

The "life" which God granteth and preſerveth to us, whether it be the natural life of the body, or the ſpiritual life of the ſoul (for both are from him) ſhould be employed in "praiſing" him. This return for his mercies we are always ready to promiſe, when we are in danger, but often forgetful to perform, when delivered out of it.

176. *I have gone aſtray like a loſt ſheep: ſeek thy ſervant; for I do not forget thy commandments.*

It is doubtful, whether David here ſpeaks of his miſery, or his ſin; of his "wandering," as an exile, in foreign lands, or of his "going aſtray" from the "commandments" of his God, though he had not altogether "forgotten," but was deſirous of returning again to the obſervance of them, and therefore beſeeches the great Shepherd to "ſeek" and bring back his "loſt ſheep.*" In the application of the

* "Erravi ſicut ovis — Omnes nos quaſi oves erravimus." Iſai. liii. 6. Sed nos bonus ille Paſtor humeris reportavit. Luc. xv. 5. BOSSUET. Mr. Merrick's Poetical Paraphraſe of this verſe is ſo beautiful and affecting, that I cannot refrain from ſubjoining it—

Thine

paſſage to ourſelves, it matters not which interpretation we adopt, ſince we are both ſinners and exiles; exiles, becauſe ſinners; we have erred and ſtrayed from God's ways, like loſt ſheep, and are, for that reaſon, excluded from our heavenly city and country, to wander for a time in the wilderneſs. Reſtore us, O Lord Jeſu, by thy grace to righteouſneſs, and by thy power to glory.

Thine eyes in me the ſheep behold,
Whoſe feet have wandered from the fold;
That, guideleſs, helpleſs, ſtrives in vain
To find it's ſafe retreat again;
Now liſtens, if perchance it's ear
The Shepherd's well-known voice may hear;
Now, as the tempeſts round it blow,
In plaintive accents vents it's woe.
Great Ruler of this earthly ball,
Do thou my erring ſteps recall:
O ſeek thou him who thee has ſought,
Nor turns from thy decrees his thought.

XXVII DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXX.

ARGUMENT.

This, and the fourteen Pſalms which follow it, are entitled, "Pſalms of Degrees, or of "Aſcenſions." For what reaſon they were ſo called, is altogether uncertain. Certain, however, it is, that they are moſt inſtruc-

tive and pleaſing compoſitions, wonderfully calculated to elevate the ſoul to God; and that the Chriſtian, as he proceeds from one degree of virtue to another, in his way towards eternal felicity, cannot employ himſelf better than in meditation on them. In the firſt of theſe Pſalms, the Author, moſt probably David, complaineth of the falſehood, the treachery, and the violence of men, amongſt whom he grieveth that his pilgrimage is prolonged.

1. *In my diſtreſs I cried unto the* LORD, *and he heard me.* 2. *Deliver my ſoul,* O LORD, *from lying lips,* and *from a deceitful tongue.*

The prophet relateth the ſucceſs of his prayer made to Jehovah in time of trouble. He "cried" and was "heard." The particular ſpecies of trouble, under which he then laboured, was that cauſed by the malice and treachery of his adverſaries, who either with "lying lips" bore falſe witneſs againſt him, or with a "deceitful tongue" tried to enſnare him, and to draw ſomething from him, on which they might ground an accuſation. Thus the Jews dealt with Chriſt; and men of their caſt and complexion have, in all ages, dealt thus with his true followers. From ſuch "lips," and ſuch "tongues," God only can "deliver" the perſons and the reputations of the moſt innocent.

3. *What ſhall be given unto thee? or what ſhall be done unto thee, thou falſe tongue?* 4. *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.*

Some

Some render the firſt of theſe two verſes a little differently; "What ſhall a falſe tongue give thee, "or what ſhall it add to thee?" The ſenſe will be much the ſame, whether the Pſalmiſt be ſuppoſed to addreſs his queſtion to the falſe tongue, or to him who is the owner of it. The purport of the queſtion plainly is this; What profit or advantage do you expect to reap from this practice of lying and ſlandering; what will at laſt be it's end, and it's reward? Then followeth the anſwer; "Sharp arrows "of the mighty one," גבור who is the avenger of truth and innocence; with a fire that burns fiercely, and burns long, like that which was made of "juniper," or ſome wood uſed in thoſe days, remarkable for increaſing and retaining heat; puniſhments juſtly inflicted on a tongue, the words of which have been keen and killing as arrows, and which, by it's lies and calumnies, hath contributed to ſet the world on fire. We read in the Goſpel of one, who exclaimed, "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his "finger in water, and cool my TONGUE; for I am "tormented in this FLAME."

5. *Wo is me that I ſojourn in Meſech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.*

The Pſalmiſt lamenteth his long continuance among thoſe deceitful and malicious men, whom he compareth to the wild, barbarous, and idolatrous Arabs, the deſcendants of "Kedar," the ſon of Iſhmael. Gen. xxv. 13. The former part of the verſe is with greater propriety, perhaps, rendered, by many of the tranſlators and expoſitors, thus; "Woe is me "that my ſojourning is prolonged—" כי גרתי משך "I

"dwell, or, my dwelling is, among the tents of "Kedar." When our Lord was upon earth, the Jews were become the ſpiritual Iſhmaelites, ſons of the bond-woman, perſecutors of the ſons of the free woman, and the children of promiſe. "O faithleſs "and perverſe generation," ſaith he, "how long "ſhall I be with you? How long ſhall I ſuffer you?" Matt. xvii. 17. "And as then he that was born "after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after "the Spirit, even ſo it is now." Gal. iv. 29. The church daily ſigheth and groaneth, becauſe her "ſo-"journing is prolonged," and ſhe dwelleth among adverſaries of various denominations; among thoſe, who take delight in vexing and troubling her. Theſe are "the tents of Kedar," among which we dwell in the wilderneſs, longing to depart, and to be with Chriſt, in the city of the living God.

6. *My ſoul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.* 7. *I* am *for peace*; or, *I am a man of peace: but when I ſpeak, they* are *for war.*

If this was the caſe of David, much more might the Son of David make the ſame complaint, that he "dwelt with them that hated peace;" that although he was "a man of peace," meek, lowly, and gracious, in his deportment to all around him; although he came to make peace, and to reconcile all things in heaven and earth; although his converſation and his preaching were of peace, and love, and the kingdom of God; yet no ſooner did he open his mouth to "ſpeak" upon theſe divine ſubjects, but his enemies were up in arms, ready to apprehend, to accuſe, to condemn, and to crucify him. Marvel not, O

diſciple

diſciple of Jeſus, if the world hate and oppoſe thee; but pray only, that when thou ſhalt be uſed as he was, thou mayeſt be enabled to bear that uſage as he did,

PSALM CXXI.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, the prophet 1, 2. introduceth a perſon, moſt probably an Iſraelite on his way to Jeruſalem, expreſſing his truſt and confidence in Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth, of whoſe favour and protection, at all times, and in all dangers, the prophet 3—8. aſſureth him. Theſe promiſes, like thoſe in the xciſt Pſalm, were, in their full and ſpiritual ſenſe, made good to Meſſiah, and are now daily accompliſhing in the members of his myſtical body, the Chriſtian church. Biſhop Lowth ſuppoſeth the two firſt verſes to be ſpoken by David, when going out to war, and the anſwer of encouragement to be made by the High Prieſt from the Holy Place. In this caſe, the idea of Warfare is added to that of Pilgrimage, and the Pſalm rendered ſtill more applicable to us, as well as to the true David, our King.

1. *I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help.* 2. *My help* cometh *from the* LORD, *which made heaven and earth.*

The true Iſraelite, amidſt the dangers of his earthly pilgrimage and warfare, looketh continually towards the heavenly city, whither he is travelling. Faith ſheweth him afar off the everlaſting "hills, "from whence cometh the help," which muſt bring him in ſafety to them. He "lifteth up his eyes," in prayer to the Almighty, whoſe temple and habitation are thereon. He putteth not his truſt in any creature, but imploreth aid immediately of "him "who made heaven and earth," and who, conſequently, hath power over all things in both.

3. *He will not ſuffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not ſlumber.* 4. *Behold, he that keepeth Iſrael, ſhall neither ſlumber nor ſleep.*

In the two firſt verſes, we heard the believer declaring his reſolution to truſt in God. The prophet now commendeth that reſolution, and encourageth him to perſevere in it. As if he had ſaid, Thou doſt well to expect help from Jehovah alone; to overlook the vanities here below; to place thy confidence, and ſet thy affections, on him who dwelleth above. Know, therefore, aſſuredly, that he will be with thee in the way in which thou goeſt; he will preſerve thee from falling, and defend thee from all dangers; for in him thou haſt a guardian, who is not, like all others, liable to remit his care, by being ſubject to ſleep or death. The eye of his Providence is upon thee, and that is always open. "Behold, "he that keepeth Iſrael ſhall neither ſlumber nor "ſleep."

5. *The* LORD *is thy keeper: the* LORD *is thy ſhade upon thy right hand.* 6. *The ſun ſhall not ſmite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*

The

The meaning is, that the good man, during his journey through life, ſhall be under God's protection at all ſeaſons; as Iſrael in the wilderneſs was defended from the burning heat of the ſun, by the moiſt and refreſhing ſhadow of the cloud; and ſecured againſt the inclement influences of the nocturnal heavens, by the kindly warmth and ſplendor diffuſed from the pillar of fire. Be thou with us thy ſervants, O Lord, in the world, as thou waſt with Iſrael in the wilderneſs; ſuffer not our virtue to diſſolve before the ſultry gleams of proſperity; permit it not to be frozen by the chilling blaſts of adverſity.

7. *The* LORD *ſhall preſerve thee from all evil: he ſhall preſerve thy ſoul.* 8. *The* LORD *ſhall preſerve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.*

To diſſipate our fears, and remove every ground of diffidence, Jehovah promiſeth, by his holy prophet, to "preſerve us from all evil," which might befal us in the way, either by turning it aſide, or turning it finally to our advantage, ſo that we ſhall not periſh, but ſee our labours happily begun and ended in him; he "ſhall preſerve our going out, and "our coming in," until, through all the viciſſitudes of this mortal ſtate, he ſhall have brought us into his holy "temple," there to become "pillars," and to "go no more out." Rev. iii. 12.

PSALM CXXII.

ARGUMENT.

The author of this Pſalm, as we are informed by it's title, was David. The ſubject of it is that joy which the people were wont to expreſs, upon their going up in companies to keep a feaſt at Jeruſalem, when the divine ſervices were regulated, and that city was appointed to be the place of public worſhip. Every thing which can be ſaid upon this topic, muſt naturally hold good in it's application to the Chriſtian church, and the celebration of her feaſts; at which ſeaſons the believer will as naturally extend his thoughts to the Jeruſalem above, and to that feſtival, which ſhall one day be there kept by all the people of God.

1. *I was glad when they ſaid unto me, Let us go into the houſe of the* LORD.

Great was the joy of an Iſraelite, when his brethren called upon him to accompany them, on ſome feſtive occaſion, to the tabernacle, or temple at Jeruſalem; great is the joy of a Chriſtian, when he is invited, in like manner, to celebrate the feaſts of the church, to commemorate the nativity, or the reſurrection, and to eat and drink at the table of his Lord. Such, in kind, but far greater in degree, is that gladneſs, which

which the pious ſoul experiences, when ſhe is called hence; when deſcending angels ſay unto her, Thy labour and ſorrow are at an end, and the hour of thy enlargement is come; put off mortality and miſery at once; quit thy houſe of bondage, and the land of thy captivity; fly forth, and "let us go together "into the houſe of the LORD, not made with hands, "eternal in the heavens."

2. *Our feet ſhall ſtand within thy gates, O Jeruſalem.* Yes, O thou holy and happy city of peace, and love, and everlaſting delight, our God will in time bring us to behold, and to enter thee; "our feet," which now, with many a weary ſtep, tread the earth, "ſhall" one day "ſtand within thy gates," which are opened to all believers; we ſhall at length reſt in thy celeſtial manſions, and converſe for ever with thy bleſt inhabitants.

3. *Jeruſalem is builded as a city that is compact together.* We ſee thee not, indeed, as yet, but we hear of thy ſtability, thy unity, thy beauty, and thy magnificence. Thy foundations are firm upon the holy hills; they are garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones; and in them are the names of the twelve apoſtles of the Lamb. Thy gates are of pearl, twelve in number, and open to all quarters, for the tribes of the ſpiritual Iſrael to come in. Thy ſtreets are of pure gold, as it were tranſparent glaſs; thou art crowned with the unfading brightneſs of eternal glory; and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple in the midſt of thee. All theſe glorious thing are ſpoken of thee, thou city of God! And yet, when we come to ſee thee with our eyes,

we

we ſhall be forced to confeſs, as the queen of Sheba did, upon viewing the earthly Jeruſalem, with it's material temple, and the court of it's mortal king, that thou far "exceedeſt the fame which we had "heard," and that "the half was not told us." 1 Kings x. 7.

4. *Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the* LORD, *unto*, or, *according to the teſtimony of Iſrael, to give thanks unto the name of the* LORD.

As all the "tribes" of Iſrael, three times in the year, were ſeen "going up" to the old Jeruſalem, in compliance with the "teſtimonies," the injunctions and inſtitutions of their law, to acknowledge the mercies, and to "give thanks unto the name of Je-"hovah," who had done ſuch great things for them; ſo from the ends of the earth are the redeemed of the Lord, out of every nation, and kindred, and people, continually aſcending, by faith and charity, to the new Jeruſalem. St. John ſaw the nations of them that were ſaved, walking in the light of the heavenly city, and he heard her ſtreets reſound with the hallelujahs of ten thouſand times ten thouſand.

5. *For there are ſet thrones of judgment, the thrones of the houſe of David.*

The Iſraelites reſorted to Jeruſalem, becauſe it was the metropolis of the country, and there was the reſidence of their monarchs, after the kingdom was eſtabliſhed in "the houſe of David." But alas, that metropolis is deſolate, and "the thrones of judg-"ment," which were therein, have been long ſince caſt down to the ground. A Jeruſalem, however, remains, which ſhall never be moved; in that Jeruſalem

ſalem is the throne of eternal judgment erected, and the Son of David ſitteth upon it. Of him it was ſaid by the angel to Mary, "The Lord God ſhall give "unto him the throne of his father David: and he "ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of "his kingdom there ſhall be no end." Luke i. 32. And he himſelf thus addreſſed his Apoſtles; "Verily, "I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me, "in the regeneration, when the Son of Man ſhall ſit "on the throne of his glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon "twelves thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael." Matt. xix. 28.

6. *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem: they ſhall proſper that love thee.*

In this latter part of our Pſalm, the members of the Iſraelitiſh church are exhorted to pray for it's peace and welfare. What that church was, the Chriſtian church militant upon earth now is, and demandeth, in like manner, the prayers of all Chriſtian people for it's peace and welfare in a troubleſome and contentious world. It's increaſe here below is in reality the increaſe of Jeruſalem above, of which it is a part, and ought to be a reſemblance. Heaven has therefore decreed, that they who contribute their labours, as well as their prayers, to promote ſo good and ſo glorious an end, ſhall enjoy it's protection, and it's bleſſing ſhall be upon the work of their hands; "They ſhall proſper that love thee."

7. *Peace be within thy walls, and proſperity*, or *plenteouſneſs, within thy palaces.*

Come, O thou divine Spirit of peace and love, who didſt reſide in the ſoul of the holy Jeſus, deſcend into his myſtical body, and fill us, who compoſe it, with

with all his heavenly tempers; put an end to hereſies, heal all ſchiſms, cauſe bitter contentions to ceaſe, aboliſh every enmity, and make us to be of one mind in thy holy city; that ſo, "peace being within her walls," her citizens may give themſelves to every profitable employment, and "plenteouſneſs" of grace, wiſdom and truth, as well as of earthly bleſſings, may be in all her "palaces." Thus will ſhe become a lively portrait of that place which is prepared for them that love one another, where, with one heart and one voice, they ſhall aſcribe "ſalvation and glory to God and to the Lamb."

8. *For my brethren and companions' ſake, I will now ſay, Peace* be *within thee.* 9. *Becauſe of the houſe of the* LORD *our God I will ſeek thy good.*

In theſe concluding verſes, the Pſalmiſt declareth the two motives, which induced him to utter his beſt wiſhes, and to uſe his beſt endeavours, for the proſperity of Jeruſalem; namely, love of his brethren, whoſe happineſs was involved in that of their city; and love of God, who had there fixed the reſidence of his glory. Theſe motives are ever in force, and ought, ſurely, to operate with marvellous energy upon our hearts, to ſtir us up to imitate the pattern now before us, in fervent zeal and unwearied labour, for the ſalvation of men, and the glory of their great Redeemer; both which will then be complete, when the church militant ſhall become triumphant, and the heavenly paradiſe ſhall be filled with plants taken from it's terreſtrial nurſery.

Theodore Zuinger, of whom ſome account may be found in Thuanus, when he lay on his death-bed, took his leave of the world, in a paraphraſe on the foregoing

foregoing Pſalm; giving it the ſame turn with that given to it above. I have never been able to get a ſight of the original *; but one may venture, I be-

* Since the publication of the firſt edition, a learned friend has obliged me with a copy of theſe Latin verſes of Zuinger, tranſcribed from the 303d page of Vitæ Germanorum Medicorum, by Melchior Adamus. They are as follow

O lux candida, lux mihi
Læti conſcia tranſitus!
Per Chriſti meritum patet
  Vitæ porta beatæ.
Me ſtatus revocat dies
Auguſtam Domini ad domum:
Jam ſacra ætherii premam
  Lætus limina templi.
Jam viſam Solymæ edita
Cœlo culmina, et ædium
Cætus angelicos, ſuo et
  Auguſtam populo urbem:
Urbem, quam procul infimis
Terræ finibus exciti
Petunt Chriſtiadæ, ut Deum
  Laudent voce perenni:
Juſſam cœlitus oppidis
Urbem jus dare ceteris,
Et ſedem fore Davidis
  Cuncta in ſæcla beati.
Mater nobilis urbium!
Semper te bona pax amat:
Et te ſemper amantibus
  Cedunt omnia recte.
Semper pax tua mœnia
Colit; ſemper in atriis
Tuis copia dexterâ
  Largâ munera fundit.
Dulcis Chriſtiadûm domus,
Civem adſcribe novitium:
Sola comitata Caritas
  Speſque Fideſque valete.

lieve,

lieve, to ſay, that it has loſt nothing in a tranſlation of it by the late learned and pious Mr. Merrick; which is ſo excellent, that I muſt beg leave to preſent it to the reader. Some of the lines are retained in his more literal Poetical Verſion, publiſhed in 1765. It may ſerve as a finiſhed ſpecimen of the noble and exalted uſe, which a Chriſtian may, and ought to make of the Pſalms of David.

PSALM CXXII.

I.

What joy, while thus I view the day,
That warns my thirſting ſoul away,
What tranſports fill my breaſt?
For, lo, my great Redeemer's power
Unfolds the everlaſting door,
And leads me to his Reſt.

II.

The feſtal morn, my God, is come,
That calls me to the hallow'd dome,
Thy preſence to adore;
My feet the ſummons ſhall attend,
With willing ſteps thy courts aſcend,
And tread th' ethereal floor.

III.

E'en now to my expecting eyes
The heav'n-built towers of Salem riſe,
E'en now, with glad ſurvey,
I view her manſions, that contain
Th' angelic forms, an awful train,
And ſhine with cloudleſs day.

IV.

IV.

Hither, from earth's remoteſt end,
Lo, the redeem'd of God aſcend,
Their tribute hither bring:
Here crown'd with everlaſting joy,
In hymns of praiſe their tongues employ,
And hail th' immortal King:

V.

Great Salem's King; who bids each ſtate
On her decrees dependent wait;
In her, ere time begun,
High on eternal baſe uprear'd,
His hands the regal ſeat prepar'd
For Jeſſe's favour'd Son.

VI.

Mother of cities! O'er thy head
See peace, with healing wings outſpread,
Delighted fix her ſtay.
How bleſt, who calls himſelf thy friend!
Succeſs his labours ſhall attend,
And ſafety guard his way.

VII.

Thy walls, remote from hoſtile fear,
Nor the loud voice of tumult hear,
Nor war's wild waſtes deplore;
There ſmiling plenty takes her ſtand,
And in thy courts with laviſh hand,
Has pour'd forth all her ſtore.

VIII.

Let me, bleſt ſeat, my name behold
Among thy citizens enroll'd,

In

In thee for ever dwell.
Let Charity my ſteps attend,
My ſole companion and my friend,
And Faith and Hope farewell!

PSALM CXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm containeth 1, 2. an act of confidence in God, with 3, 4. a prayer for deliverance from that reproach and contempt which infidelity and ſenſuality are wont to pour upon the afflicted people of God.

1. *Unto thee I lift up mine eyes, O thou that dwelleſt in the heavens.*

The church, when diſtreſſed and perſecuted upon earth, "lifteth up her eyes to him that dwelleth in "the heavens," from thence beholding and ordering all things here below. It is by his permiſſion that ſhe is depreſſed and inſulted; and he only can deliver her out of the hands of her enemies.

2. *Behold, as the eyes of ſervants* look *unto the hand of their maſters*, and *as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her miſtreſs; ſo our eyes* wait *upon the* LORD *our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*

The ſervants of God, like other ſervants, if they are injured and ſuffer violence, expect redreſs and protection from the Maſter, whoſe they are, and whom they ſerve. Under the law of Moſes, a maſter was to demand ſatisfaction, and to have it made him,

for

for any hurt done to his ſervant. And ſhall not the beſt of maſters avenge the wrongs done to thoſe who ſerve Him; and done, perhaps, becauſe they ſerve him? Without doubt, he will avenge them ſpeedily, and reward the ſufferers glorioufly.

3. *Have mercy upon us, O* LORD, *have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.* 4. *Our ſoul is exceedingly filled with the ſcorning of thoſe that are at eaſe,* and *with the contempt of the proud.*

Unbelieving, ungodly, and worldly men, who are "at eaſe," and boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their riches, will always be ready to caſt upon the afflicted ſervants of Chriſt ſome portion of that reproach and contempt, which were ſo plentifully poured upon their bleſſed Maſter, in the day of his paſſion, and indeed through his whole life. With theſe they may juſtly complain that "their ſouls are exceedingly filled," inſomuch that they are compelled to exclaim with redoubled earneſtneſs, "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, "have mercy upon us." And let them know, for their comfort, that the Lord will "have mercy upon "them" in that day, when ſenſuality ſhall be ſucceeded by torment, and pride ſhall end in ſhame and confuſion; when patient poverty ſhall inherit everlaſting riches, and oppreſſed humility ſhall be exalted to a throne above the ſtars.

PSALM CXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, which, as we are informed by the title, hath David for it's author, the

church deſcribeth the danger, in which ſhe had been, and giveth to God alone the glory of her deliverance out of it.

1. *If* it had not been *the* LORD *who was on our ſide, now may Iſrael ſay*; 2. *If* it had not been *the* LORD *who was on our ſide, when men roſe up againſt us:* 3. *Then they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled againſt us.*

The people of Iſrael, reſcued from impending ruin, break forth into a joyful acknowledgement of that almighty aid, to which they were indebted for their deliverance. "Men" roſe up againſt them, but "Jehovah" was on their ſide; men intended to devour, but God interpoſed to ſave. May not "the "Iſrael of God" ſay, in like manner, "If the Lord "had not been on our ſide," when our ſpiritual enemies, ſin, death, and hell, were in arms againſt us, ſurely now "they had ſwallowed us up quick," and we had periſhed everlaſtingly. It is thou, O Lord Jeſu, who haſt wrought for us this great ſalvation; it is thou, who from the beginning haſt preſerved thy church in the world, amidſt the perſecutions which muſt otherwiſe have put an end to it's very exiſtence.

4. *Then the waters had overwhelmed us*; *the ſtream*, or, *torrent had gone over our ſoul:* 5. *Then the proud*, or, *ſwelling waters had gone over our ſoul.*

The redeemed are aſtoniſhed, upon looking back, at the greatneſs of the danger to which they had been expoſed. They can compare the fury and inſolence of their adverſaries to nothing but overwhelming floods,

floods, and desolating torrents; and they consider themselves as snatched by a miracle from instant destruction. Happy they, who are taken from the evil to come, and have passed from the miseries of earth to the felicities of heaven, where they are neither tempted nor molested more. The devout Christian, whom, in perilous times, and towards the close of life, a gracious Providence has thrown ashore in some sequestered corner, from whence he views those secular tumults with which he hath no farther concern, is perhaps arrived at the next degree of happiness to that of just Spirits made perfect.

6. *Blessed* be *the* LORD, *who hath not given us* as *a prey to their teeth.* 7. *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*

The marvellous deliverance of Israel is illustrated by two other images. It is compared to the escape of a lamb from the jaws of a wolf, or a lion; and to that of a bird, by the breaking of the snare, in which it had been entangled, before the fowler came to seize and to kill it. Save us, O God, from the rage and the subtlety of our spiritual adversary; save us from his teeth, when he would devour; from his snares, when he would deceive; suffer us not, either by persecution, or temptation, to fall from thee; let the lion gnash his teeth, and the fowler look for his captive in vain; that so we too may sing the song of Zion in thy heavenly kingdom, and say, "Blessed be the Lord, "who hath not given us over for a prey unto their "teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the

"ſnare of the fowlers; the ſnare is broken, and we "are eſcaped."

8. *Our help* is *in the name of the* LORD, *who made heaven and earth.*

The great leſſon which this Pſalm, from the beginning to the end, inculcates, is, that for every diliverance, whether of a temporal or ſpiritual nature, we ſhould, in imitation of the ſaints above, aſcribe "Sal-"vation to God and to the Lamb."

PSALM CXXV.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, the church is comforted with the promiſes 1, 2. of God's protection, and 3. of his removing, in due time, from his inheritance, the rod of the oppreſſor; when 4. the faithful will be rewarded, and 5. apoſtates puniſhed with other workers of iniquity. Aben Ezra, as cited by Dr. Hammond, applieth the Pſalm to the days of Meſſiah.

1. *They that truſt in the* LORD, ſhall be *as mount Zion*, which *cannot be removed*, but *abideth for ever.* 2. As *the mountains* are *round about Jeruſalem, ſo the* LORD is *round about his people from henceforth even for ever.*

The ſtability of the church, and the protection afforded her by Jehovah, were of old repreſented by the mountain on which the divine preſence reſided, and by the hills which encompaſſed Jeruſalem, ſo as to

to render that city in a manner impregnable. While her inhabitants continued to "truſt in the Lord," this was the caſe. But when they became faithleſs and diſobedient, ſhe became weak, and like another city. Let not our "truſt in God" be a preſumptuous ungrounded aſſurance, but let it be a confidence ſpringing from faith unfeigned, out of a pure heart, a good conſcience, and fervent charity. Then ſhall our ſituation, whether as a church, or as individuals, reſemble that of the holy mount in the beloved city, and our God will be unto us a fortreſs, and a wall round about. But let us never forget, that the promiſes to us, like thoſe to Iſrael, are conditional. "Becauſe of unbelief they were broken off, "and we ſtand by faith.

3. *For the rod of the wicked ſhall not reſt upon the lot of the righteous: leſt the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.*

God may, and often doth permit "the rod" or power "of the wicked to fall upon the lot of the "righteous," in this world. But it is only for the purpoſes of chaſtiſement, or probation. The rod is not ſuffered to "reſt, or abide" there too long, "leſt "the righteous," harraſſed and worn down by oppreſſion, and ſeeing no end of their calamities, ſhould be tempted to "put their hands to iniquity," and practiſe that wickedneſs, which they find to proſper ſo well here below. The import of this verſe ſeemeth to be the ſame with that of our Lord's prediction concerning the troubles of the latter days. "Then "ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince "the beginning of the world to this time, no nor

"ever ſhall be. And except thoſe days ſhould be "ſhortened, there ſhould no fleſh be ſaved. But for "the elects' ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhortened." Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

4. *Do good*, O LORD, *unto* thoſe that be *good, and to* them that are *upright in heart.* 5. *As for ſuch as turn aſide unto their crooked ways, the* LORD *ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity:* but *peace* ſhall be *upon Iſrael.*

The "good and upright in heart" are they who ſtand ſteady in every change of circumſtances; who complain not of God's diſpenſations, but, believing every thing to be beſt which he ordains, adhere to him with a will entirely conformed to his, in adverſity no leſs than in proſperity. To theſe Jehovah will finally "do good," and they ſhall receive the reward of their faith and patience; while ſuch as, in time of trial, have fallen away, and returned no more, ſhall be "led forth" to puniſhment "with the "workers of iniquity," to whoſe company their apoſtaſy hath joined them. And then, "peace ſhall be "upon the Iſrael of God," with joy and gladneſs, for evermore.

XXVII DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, the children of Zion 1—3. deſcribe the joy conſequent upon their reſtoration

ration from captivity; 4. they pray God to bring back the reſt of their countrymen, and to compleat his work; 5, 6. they foreſee and predict the ſucceſs of their labours in rebuilding their ruined city with it's temple, and cultivating again their deſolated country. The return of Iſrael from Babylon holds forth a figure of the ſame import with the exodus of that people from Egypt. And this Pſalm, like the prophecies of Iſaiah, repreſenteth the bleſſed effects of a ſpiritual redemption, in words primarily alluding to that temporal releaſe.

1. *When the* LORD *turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.*

That Cyrus ſhould iſſue a decree for the Jews to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city and temple; that he ſhould diſmiſs ſuch a number of captives, not only without money and without price, but ſhould ſend them home laden with preſents; Ezra i. 1—4. this was the work of Jehovah, who only could thus "turn the captivity of Zion." A reſtoration ſo compleat, ſo ſtrange and unlooked for, brought about at once, without any endeavours uſed on the ſide of Iſrael, ſeemed, in all theſe reſpects, as a "dream;" and the parties concerned, when they ſaw and heard ſuch things, could ſcarce believe themſelves to be awake. That the King of kings, of his own mere love and mercy, ſhould take pity on poor mankind, in their more grievous captivity under ſin

and death; that he ſhould ſend his only Son to purchaſe their liberty, his Spirit to enrich, and conduct them to their country above, and his heralds to proclaim ſuch unexpected deliverance to all the world; this likewiſe was the work of the ſame Jehovah, who only could THUS "turn again the captivity "of his Zion." Sinners, when the tidings of a ſalvation ſo great and marvellous are preached to them, think themſelves in a "dream," and with difficulty give credit even to the royal proclamation, though the great ſeal of heaven be affixed to it.

2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with ſinging: then ſaid they among the heathen, The* LORD *hath done great things for them.* 3. *The* LORD *hath done great things for us*; whereof *we are glad.*

The people of God ſoon find, that they are not mocked with illuſions, but that all about them is reality and truth. Then ſorrow and ſighing, fear and diſtruſt, fly away together. Joy fills their hearts, and overflows by their tongues, in ſongs of praiſe. The nations hear, and are aſtoniſhed, and own the hand of Jehovah in the reſtoration of his people; "Jeho-"vah hath done great things for them." The choſen people echo back the gladſome ſound, and reply, with tranſports of gratitude, "Jehovah hath done "great things for us, whereof we are glad." Every word of this agreeth not more exactly to the return from Babylon, than it doth to that eternal redemption thereby prefigured, which is the grand ſubject of thankſgiving in the Chriſtian church.

4. *Turn again our captivity, O* LORD, *as the ſtreams in the ſouth.*

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The joy occaſioned by Cyrus's proclamation having been deſcribed in the former part of the Pſalm, we may now ſuppoſe ſome of the Jews ready to ſet out on their return home; at which time, and during their journey, they prefer this petition to God, that he would be pleaſed to bring back the reſt of their countrymen, who, like "floods" rolling down upon the thirſty regions of the "ſouth*," might people the land, and by their labours put an end to the deſolations of Judah. That God would daily increaſe the number of true converts from the world to the church, to clear and cultivate the myſtical vineyard, to build and to ornament the holy city, ſhould be the prayer of every labourer in that vineyard, of every citizen in that city.

5. *They that ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy.* 6. *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious ſeed, ſhall doubtleſs come again with rejoicing, bringing his ſheaves* with him.

The fatigue of travelling from Babylon to Judea; the melancholy proſpect of a long depopulated coun-

* I think the image is taken from the "torrents" in the deſerts to the ſouth of Judea; in Idumæa, Arabia Petræa, &c. a mountainous country. Theſe torrents were conſtantly dried up in the ſummer; See Job vi. 17, 18. and as conſtantly "returned" after the rainy ſeaſon, and filled again their deſerted channels. The point of the compariſon ſeems to be the "return" and renewal of theſe (not "rivers" but) "torrents;" which yearly leave their beds dry, but fill them again; as the Jews had left their country deſolate, but now "flowed again" into it. Biſhop LOWTH, in MERRICK's Annotations.—Dr. DURELL renders this verſe as follows—"The turning of our captivity, O "Lord, is as ſtreams in the ſouth."

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try, and ruined city; the toil neceſſary to be undergone, before the former could be again brought into order, and the latter rebuilt; all theſe conſiderations could not but allay the joy of the releaſed captives, and even draw many tears from their eyes. They are therefore comforted with a gracious promiſe, that God would give a bleſſing to the labours of their hands, and crown them with ſucceſs, ſo that they ſhould once more ſee Jeruſalem in proſperity, and behold in Zion the beauty of holineſs. This promiſe is conveyed under images borrowed from the inſtructive ſcenes of agriculture. In the ſweat of his brows the huſbandman tills his land, and caſts the ſeed into the ground, where, for a time, it lies dead and buried. A dark and dreary winter ſucceeds, and all ſeems to be loſt. But at the return of ſpring, univerſal nature revives, and the once deſolate fields are covered with corn, which, when matured by the ſun's heat, the chearful reapers cut down, and it is brought home with triumphant ſhouts of joy. Here, O diſciple of Jeſus, behold an emblem of thy preſent labour, and thy future reward. Thou "ſoweſt," perhaps, "in tears;" thou doeſt thy duty amidſt perſecution and affliction, ſickneſs, pain, and ſorrow; thou laboureſt in the church, and no account is made of thy labours; no profit ſeems likely to ariſe from them. Nay, thou muſt thyſelf drop into the duſt of death, and all the ſtorms of that winter muſt paſs over thee, until thy form ſhall be periſhed, and thou ſhalt ſee corruption. Yet, the day is coming, when thou ſhalt "reap in joy;" and plentiful ſhall be thy harveſt. For thus thy bleſſed Maſter "went forth

"weep-

"weeping, a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with "grief, bearing precious ſeed," and ſowing it around him, till at length his own body was buried, like a grain of wheat, in the furrow of the grave. But he aroſe, and is now in heaven; from whence he "ſhall "doubtleſs come again with rejoicing," with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, "bring-"ing his ſheaves with him." Then ſhall every man receive the fruit of his works, and have praiſe of God.

PSALM CXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

If this Pſalm were written by Solomon, or by David for Solomon, as the title importeth, it was probably uſed again at the time of re-building the city and temple, after the re-turn from Babylon. But, indeed, it is a Pſalm which can never be out of ſeaſon, the deſign of it's author being to teach us the neceſſity of a dependance upon God and his bleſſing, in every work to which we ſet our hands. What is ſaid with regard to an earth-ly houſe, city, and family, extendeth alſo to the ſpiritual houſe, city, and family of Chriſt, which are now, what Jeruſalem, the temple, and the people of Iſrael, were in old time.

1. *Except the* LORD *build the houſe, they labour in vain*

vain that build it: except the LORD *keep the city, the watchman waketh* but *in vain.*

In every undertaking, the bleſſing of God muſt accompany the labours of man, to render them effectual. No work can proſper without Him, nor can any deſign miſcarry under his favour and protection, which are equally neceſſary to be obtained by the builder in time of peace, and by the ſoldier in time of war. But they, above all men, ought to implore the divine grace and benediction, who are employed either in building or defending the ſpiritual houſe and city of God; eſpecially as the ſame perſons, like the Jews after the captivity, ſurrounded by enemies always ready to obſtruct the work, are often obliged to hold a ſword in one hand, while they build with the other. Our own edification in faith and holineſs muſt likewiſe be carried on by us in this attitude, by reaſon of the many temptations which are continually aſſailing us. It may alſo be remarked, that both Solomon and Zerubbabel had vainly laboured to conſtruct the firſt or the ſecond material temple, unleſs Jehovah himſelf had built the true Houſe for the reception of his glory, that is to ſay, the Temple of Chriſt's body, and, after it was fallen down, had reared it again, by a reſurrection from the dead.

2. It is *vain for you to riſe up early, to ſit up late, to eat the bread of ſorrows:* for *ſo he giveth his beloved ſleep.*

The Pſalmiſt doth not, certainly, intend to ſay, that labour and diligence are vain, but that they are ſo, except the Lord be with the labourer: the buſineſs is not to be done by all the induſtry and pains,

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all the carking and caring in the world, without Him; whereas, if his aid be called in, if part of our time be ſpent in prayer, not the whole of it in prayerleſs toiling and moiling, our work will become eaſier, and go on better; a ſolicitude and anxiety for it's ſucceſs and completion, will no longer prey upon our minds by day, and break our reſt at night; we ſhall cheerfully fulfil our daily taſks, and then, with confidence and reſignation, lay our heads upon our pillows, and God will "give to his beloved" a ſweet and undiſturbed "ſleep," which ſhall fit them to return every morning with renewed vigour and alacrity, to their ſtated employments. This ſeemeth to be the import of the verſe. An obſcurity has been occaſioned in the tranſlations, by rendering the adverb כֵּן ſo; "ſo he giveth his beloved ſleep;" in which form, this laſt part of the verſe will not connect with what goes before. But if כֵּן be tranſlated, like it's kindred particle אָכֵן "SURELY* he giveth "his beloved ſleep;" or, as Dr. Hammond renders it, "SINCE he giveth his beloved ſleep;" the difficulty will vaniſh, and the ſenſe appear to be, as above. Nor can we eaſily find a more profitable piece of inſtruction, with regard to the management of all our concerns, temporal and ſpiritual.

3. *Lo, children* are *an heritage of the* LORD: and *the fruit of the womb* is his *reward.*

The labours of mankind, firſt in building houſes and cities, and then in guarding and ſecuring their

* This is the ſecond of the ſenſes given to this particle by Noldius, who cites, in confirmation of it, 1 Sam. ix. 13. 1 Kings xx. 40.

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poſſeſſions, are undergone, not with a view to themſelves alone, but to their families, which they would eſtabliſh and perpetuate. The Pſalmiſt, therefore, in the preceding verſes, having taught men to expect a happy ſettlement only from the favour of Jehovah, now directs them to look up to him for the farther bleſſing of a numerous and virtuous progeny. He can in a moment blaſt the moſt fruitful ſtock, or he can "make the barren woman to keep houſe, and to "become a joyful mother of children. Lo, children "are an heritage of Jehovah;" an heritage which he beſtows on thoſe who fear him; "the fruit of the "womb is a reward" conferred by him, where he ſees it will be a bleſſing indeed, upon faithful and pious parents. St. Paul calls the converts made by his miniſtry, his "children;" and all believers are the children of Chriſt, the "heritage" given him by his Father, the "reward" of his righteous life, and meritorious death; as it is written, "I will give thee "the heathen for thine inheritance. He ſhall ſee of "the travail of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied." Pſ. ii. 8. Iſai. liii. 11.

4. *As arrows* are *in the hand of a mighty man: ſo* are *children of the youth.*

Children, when well educated, are like ſo many "arrows in the hand of a ſtrong man;" ready winged with duty and love, to fly to the mark; poliſhed and keen, to grace and maintain the cauſe of their parents, to defend them from hoſtile invaſions, and inſtantly to repel every aſſailant. The Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians were arrows in the hand of Meſſiah, with which he encountered his enemies, and ſubdued

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the nations to the faith. When by the ſplendor of their ſanctity, the power of their miracles, and the efficacy of their preaching, they pierced the hearts of thouſands and ten thouſands, what were they but "arrows in the hand of גבר the Mighty One?" And in this inſtance likewiſe it may truly be ſaid, that no well nurtured ſon of Chriſt and the Church will hear his Father diſhonoured, or deſpiſe his Mother when ſhe is old.

5. *Happy* is *the man that hath his quiver full of them: they ſhall not be aſhamed, but they ſhall ſpeak with the enemies in the gate.*

In a houſe full of dutiful children conſiſteth the happineſs of their parents, who then can never want friends; friends, that will at no time be "aſhamed," but will at all times rejoice, to appear for them, to meet their "enemies" and accuſers "in the gate," or place of judgment,* there to anſwer any charge againſt them, to vindicate them in their perſons, their good name, or their property. It is a glorious ſight to behold children thus ſtanding forth in the defence of their parents. In the multitude of true believers conſiſt the glory of Chriſt, and the riches of the church. How forward were the primitive Chriſtians to meet the enemies of theſe their ſpiritual parents "in the gate;" how ready, in their cauſe, to ſpeak openly, and, having witneſſed a good confeſſion, to

* Mr. Merrick obſerves, that the gate was ſometimes the ſeat of war, as well as the place of judicature. "Then was war in "the gates." Judges v. 8. He mentions a remarkable Chineſe proverb: "When a ſon is born into a family, a bow and arrow "are hung before the gate."

die

die by the hand of the executioner! Therefore ſhall they not be aſhamed at the judgment of the laſt day, but ſhall then ſtand with great boldneſs before the face of ſuch as have afflicted, perſecuted, and tormented them. For their heavenly father will then be their Judge, and will own, in his turn, the cauſe of his dutiful children, who for his ſake endured tribulation, and loved not their lives unto the death. Confuſion ſhall overwhelm the accuſer of the brethren, with all the inſtruments of his malice; but glory, honour, and immortality ſhall be given to the children of God.

PSALM CXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm containeth a promiſe made to him who 1. feared Jehovah, and walked in his ways, that he ſhould be bleſſed 2. in his perſon, and 3, 4. in his family, and that he ſhould ſee the good of Jeruſalem. The Pſalm was, probably, ſung at the marriages of the Iſraelites, as it is now a part of the matrimonial ſervice among us. In it's prophetical and exalted ſenſe, it hath reſpect to the perſon, marriage, family, and city of Meſſiah.

1. *Bleſſed* is *every one that feareth the* LORD: *that walketh in his ways.*

Happineſs belongeth not to the rich, the powerful and the proſperous, as ſuch; but, in every ſtate and con-

condition, bleſſed is the man that "feareth Jehovah," that ſo feareth him as to obey him, and to "walk in "his ways," notwithſtanding all the obſtructions he may meet with from the world, the fleſh, and the devil. Bleſſed above all the ſons of men, and the author of bleſſing to them all, was the man Chriſt Jeſus, becauſe above them all, and for them all, he feared, he loved, and he obeyed.

2. *For thou ſhalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy* ſhalt *thou* be, *and* it ſhall be *well with thee.*

The perſon is here beautifully changed, and to the man who feareth Jehovah is addreſſed an enumeration of thoſe bleſſings which ſhall attend him. He is to "eat the labour of his hands," that is, the fruit, or returns of his labours. Hereby it is implied, that he is not to be idle, but to "labour, that he may eat; that he is not to be niggardly, but to "eat," when he has laboured; that he is neither to be unjuſt, by living upon the labours, nor enſlaved, by depending upon the bounty of others, but to eat of "his own" labours; and that he, whoſe labours procure him a ſuſtenance, hath enough to be "bleſſed" and happy. "Happy ſhalt thou be, and it ſhall be "well with thee;" every thing ſhall happen, which God ſeeth to be beſt for thee in this life, and (as ſaith the Chaldee Paraphraſt on the place) "it ſhall be "good to thee in the world to come." The glory of Chriſt, and the ſalvation of mankind, were the fruits of his actions and his ſufferings in the days of his fleſh; ſo that, in the enjoyment of them, he doth no more than "eat of the labours of his hands;" or, to uſe the words of Iſaiah, "he ſeeth of the travail

"of his ſoul, and is ſatisfied." Before he went hence, he took comfort in the reflection, "I have glorified "thee on the earth, I have finiſhed the work which "thou gaveſt me to do," John xvii. 4. Happy ſhalt thou be, O Chriſtian, and it ſhall be well with thee, if at thy latter end thou ſhalt be able to draw comfort from the ſame conſideration.

3. *Thy wife* ſhall be *as a fruitful vine by the ſides of thine houſe: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*

Marriage was ordained by God to compleat the felicity of man in a ſtate of innocence; and the benediction of heaven will ever deſcend upon it, when undertaken in "the fear of the Lord." The vine, a lowly plant, raiſed with tender care, becoming, by it's luxuriancy, it's beauty, it's fragrance, and it's cluſters, the ornament and glory of the houſe to which it is joined, and by which it is ſupported, forms the fineſt imaginable emblem of a fair, virtuous, and fruitful wife. The olive trees planted by the inhabitants of the eaſtern countries around their tables, or banquetting places in their gardens,‡ to chear the eye by their verdure, and to refreſh the body by their cooling ſhade, do no leſs aptly and ſignificantly ſet forth

‡ This is Biſhop Patrick's idea. The learned and ingenious Mr. Harmer, in his very valuable "Obſervations on divers Paſ-"ſages of Scripture" (Vol. I. p. 197, 2d edit.) diſapproves of it: as, he ſays, "we find no ſuch arbours in the Levant, nor "is the tree very proper for the purpoſe." He thinks therefore the "table" refers to the "children" only, and not to the "olives." But Mr. Merrick, in his Annotations, produces ſome very good arguments on the ſide of Biſhop Patrick.

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the pleaſure which parents feel, at the ſight of a numerous and flouriſhing offſpring. As marriage was from the beginning intended to repreſent the myſtical union between Chriſt and his church, which union is ſpoken of in matrimonial language, through the Scriptures both of the Old and New Teſtament, we need but extend our view, to behold, under the imagery of the vine and the olive plants, the prolific Spouſe of Meſſiah, and the children of Peace aſſembled around the Table of their heavenly Father. See Pſ. lxxx. 8. Rom. xi. 17.

4. *Behold, that thus ſhall the man be bleſſed that feareth the* LORD.

Are temporal bleſſings, then, the reward of piety? They are not it's only, or chief reward, but are often "added" even under the new diſpenſation, to thoſe who "firſt ſeek the kingdom of God, and his righte-"ouſneſs." When they are withholden, or withdrawn, it is for the ſecurity or increaſe of thoſe more valuable bleſſings which are ſpiritual. There are times, when father, mother, brethren, ſiſters, wife, children, and lands muſt be given up for Chriſt's and the goſpel's ſake. But ample amends are promiſed to be made to all who thus part with earthly relations and poſſeſſions. They find in the church other fathers, mothers, brethren, ſiſters, children, &c. and at the reſurrection they will "inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7. and brighter coronets of glory ſhall ſparkle upon their heads. The Scriptures ſhew us the ſervants of God in every ſtate and condition; we view them rich and poor, honoured and deſpiſed, ſick and in health, married and ſingle, childleſs and other-

wiſe, in proſperity and in adverſity; to teach us, that all things work together for good to them who love God; ſo that the believer hath comfort always. If temporal bleſſings be granted him, he accepteth them as ſhadows of thoſe which are eternal; if they are denied, he remembereth that they are only ſhadows, and are therefore denied, that he may fix his thoughts and affections more firmly on the ſubſtance.

5. *The* LORD *ſhall bleſs thee out of Zion: and thou ſhalt ſee the good of Jeruſalem, all the days of thy life.* 6. *Yea thou ſhalt ſee thy childrens children,* and *peace upon Iſrael.*

Every true Iſraelite rejoiceth in the proſperity of Zion; a bleſſing upon the church diffuſeth itſelf to all the members thereof; and the good of Jeruſalem with peace upon Iſrael, is all the good we can deſire to ſee upon earth. Hereafter we ſhall ſee greater things than theſe. Jehovah from the heavenly Zion will bleſs us with the viſion of his immortal glory; we ſhall ſee the good of the new Jeruſalem, the wealth, beauty, and majeſty of that holy city; we ſhall ſee the generations of the faithful walking in the light of it; with that everlaſting peace and reſt, which remain for the Iſrael of God. Theſe are the bleſſings promiſed to Meſſiah, and to his ſeed, for evermore.

PSALM

PSALM CXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

In the former part of this Pſalm, 1—4. the church declareth herſelf to have been often aſſailed and perſecuted by her enemies, but as often reſcued and preſerved by Jehovah; in the latter part of it, 5—8. ſhe predicteth the miſerable end of all thoſe who hate Zion.

1. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Iſrael now ſay:* 2. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed againſt me.*

Affliction is nothing new to the people of God. Many a time have the righteous been under perſecution, from the hour when Cain roſe up againſt his brother Abel, to this day. Like the buſh which Moſes beheld in the deſert, the church hath "burned with fire," but is not yet "conſumed;" and for the ſame reaſon, becauſe God is in the midſt of her.* He who took our nature upon him, was alſo "afflicted from his youth," but his enemies "prevailed not finally againſt him." And it is obſervable, that what God ſpake, by his prophet Hoſea, con-

* Eccleſiæ jam inde ab initio in Abel, in Enoch, in Noë, in Abraham, in Lot, in Ægypticâ ſervitute, in Moyſe, et Prophetis graves perpeſſa inimicos; dicit illa quidem ſæpe a juventute ſe fuiſſe oppugnatam: nihilo tamen ſeciùs perveniſſe ad ſenectutem, ac ne in ſenectute quidem opprimi poſſe. Victus enim qui ſæviebat, vicit qui ſufferebat. BOSSUET.

cerning Iſrael, "When Iſrael was a child, then I "loved him, and called my ſon out of Egypt," is by St. Matthew applied to Chriſt; "Joſeph took "the young child and his mother, by night, and de- "parted into Egypt, and was there until the death "of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was "ſpoken by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I call- "ed my ſon," Matt. ii. 14. Hoſ. xi. 1. The truth is that there ſubſiſteth between Chriſt and the church an union like that between the head and the members of the ſame body; they are therefore called by the ſame name, ISRAEL, and what is ſaid concerning one, frequently admitteth of an application to the other. He became like us by taking our nature, and we become like him by receiving his grace. Our ſufferings are accounted as his; and his righteouſneſs ſpoken of as ours.

3. *The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.* 4. *The* LORD *is righteous: he hath cut aſunder the cords of the wicked.*

The former of theſe two verſes expreſſeth a ſtate of great affliction, the latter, a deliverance from that ſtate. The word חרש which ſignifieth to dig, or cut the ground, and ſo, to plow, is alſo uſed ſimply for cutting, carving, or graving; See Exod. xxxv. 33. Jer. xvii. 1. Being here applied to the back of captives, and cords having been the inſtruments of it, in all reaſon it is to be underſtood of ſcourging, which cuts, and, as it were, digs, and plows, and makes furrows in the fleſh; and the longer the cords of the ſcourges are, the longer are the wounds and furrows. For our ſakes, he who knew no ſin "gave

"his

"his back to the ſmiters," Iſai. l. 6. and permitted thoſe "plowers to make long their furrows upon it." But "the righteous Lord cut aſunder the cords of the "wicked;" vengeance overtook the wretched inſtruments of his ſufferings; and the perſecutors of his ſervants ſhall periſh in like manner, as the Pſalmiſt proceedeth to aſſure us in the verſes following.

5. *Let them all*, or, *they all ſhall be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.*

Since the ways of God are equal, the deſtruction which hath lighted on former perſecutors of the church affordeth an aſſurance, that all, in every age, who hate Zion, ſhall, at the day of final retribution, if not before that day, feel the weight of his arm, who is the Saviour, the King, and the God of Zion.

6. *Let them*, or, *they ſhall be as the graſs* upon *the houſe tops, which withereth afore it groweth up:* Heb. *is pulled up.** 7. *Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand: nor he that bindeth ſheaves his boſom.* 8. *Neither do they which go by ſay, the bleſſing of the* LORD be *upon you: we bleſs you in the name of the* LORD.

The tranſient proſperity of mortal man is often in ſacred writ compared to graſs, the hiſtory of which is contained in theſe few words, It cometh up, and is cut down. But here the compariſon is carried ſtill farther. Not the common graſs in the field, but "graſs growing on the houſe tops" is ſelected to convey the idea of bad men; graſs, which having no depth of earth, into which it may ſtrike it's roots,

* Mr. Harmer takes the idea of the Pſalmiſt to be, "Which "withereth before it unſheaths it's ear." Obſerv. 11. 463.

doth not await the hand of the gatherer, but "withereth" even "before it is plucked up." And then, ſo thin, ſo wretched, and ſo unprofitable is the crop, that none are employed to collect and carry it in; none to whom paſſengers might addreſs thoſe acclamations and ſalutations, cuſtomary at ſuch times, as "The LORD be with you, bleſs you," &c. Ruth ii. 4. Thus, while the felicity of Zion's children is rooted and grounded in Chriſt, that of her enemies hath no foundation at all. While the church ſubſiſteth from generation to generation, the kingdoms and empires, that have perſecuted her, fade and wither away of themſelves. And at the general harveſt of the world, when the righteous ſhall be carried by angels, with joyful acclamations, into the manſions prepared for them above, the wicked, unregarded by the heavenly reapers, and unbleſſed by all, ſhall become fuel for a fire that goeth not out; reſembling, in this their ſad end, likewiſe, that worthleſs graſs, "which to day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the "oven."

PSALM CXXX.

ARGUMENT.

This is the ſixth of thoſe which are ſtyled Penitential Pſalms. It is calculated for the uſe of the church, or any member thereof; and containeth 1, 2. a complaint of great diſtreſs; 3. a confeſſion of man's ſinfulneſs; 4—8. an act of faith in the divine mercy, and the promiſed redemption.

1. *Out*

1. *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O* LORD.
2. LORD, *hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my ſupplications.*

From the depths of ſin, and the miſery occaſioned by ſin, the penitent, like another Jonas, intombed in the whale's belly, and ſurrounded by all the waves of the ocean, crieth unto God for help and ſalvation. Fervent prayer will find it's way, through every obſtruction, to the ears of him who ſitteth upon his holy hill. And may not the bodies of the faithful, buried in the duſt, be ſaid to cry, out of the depths of the grave, for a joyful reſurrection, according to the promiſe and the pattern of Chriſt, who, after three days, came forth from the heart of the earth, as Jonas did from the belly of the whale?

3. *If thou,* LORD, *ſhouldeſt mark iniquities, O* LORD, *who ſhall ſtand?*

A reaſon is here urged, why God ſhould ſpare and pardon the ſuppliant, namely, becauſe was he accurately to note the offences of the beſt men, and to produce them in judgment againſt the offenders, no man could ſtand in that judgment, but the whole race of Adam muſt continue to eternity under the dominion of ſin and death; which a gracious and merciful God would not permit to be the caſe. It is accordingly declared in the next verſe, that meaſures had been taken to prevent ſo deplorable a cataſtrophe.

4. *But* there is *forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared.*

True repentance is founded upon the ſenſe of our own wretchedneſs, and faith in the divine mercy. Without the former, we ſhould never ſeek for pardon

don and grace; without the latter, we ſhould deſpair of finding them. The Pſalmiſt, therefore, having in the three preceding verſes, expreſſed the one, now maketh profeſſion of the other. "There is for-"giveneſs with thee;" thou wilt not "mark iniqui-"ties," or leave us to the rigours of ſtrict juſtice, but thou haſt deviſed means that we periſh not for ever: thou haſt provided an atonement, and in virtue of that atonement, the ſinner may obtain pardon; he need not, therefore, reject thy ſervice, and caſt himſelf away in deſpair, but is encouraged to ſerve thee acceptably through faith, with godly fear; "there is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be "feared." Or the meaning may be, Thou forgiveſt man, that ſo, being reſtored to thy favour, and endued with thy grace, he may thenceforth fear, or ſerve thee, as it becomes one, who hath obtained mercy, to do.

5. *I wait for the* LORD, *my ſoul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.* 6. *My ſoul* waiteth *for the* LORD, *more than they that watch for the morning:* I ſay, more than *they that watch for the morning.*

The repetitions here do beautifully expreſs that ardent deſire which the contrite ſoul hath for the ſalvation of God. Dr. Hammond ſeemeth to have given the true conſtruction of ver. 6. נפשי לאדני "My "ſoul to the Lord, that is, riſeth, cometh, or haſten-"eth to the Lord, משמרים לבקר from the morning "watchers, that is, from the time when they haſten "to their watches; in other words, the guards every "morning that haſten to their watches, are not earlier "than I am in my daily addreſſes to God. Who

"theſe

"these watchers or guards of the morning are, the "Chaldee hath best expressed; They that observe "the morning watches, that they may offer their "morning oblation; that is, the priests which in "their turns officiated; or rather, some officers of "theirs, which were peculiarly appointed from a "tower to expect the first appearance of break of "day." With such earnestness did the ancient church expect the appearance of that day spring from on high, which was, in the fulness of time, to visit the world. With equal earnestness have the faithful since looked out for the dawning of that last morning, which is to abolish sin, and put an end to sorrow.

7. *Let Israel hope in the* LORD: *for with the* LORD there is *mercy, and with him* is *plenteous redemption.* 8. *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities*, or *sins.*

These verses are perfectly evangelical. The church of Israel was exhorted to "hope" in Jehovah, because with him there was "mercy, and plenteous re-"demption." And of what nature was that redemption? A redemption from sin; "he shall redeem "Israel from all his SINS;" consequently, from all trouble and misery, which are but the effects of sin, and will cease when their cause shall be finally taken away. Now what is this, but the Gospel itself? Or where is the difference between this of the Psalmist, "He shall redeem Israel from all his sins," and that of the Evangelist, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, "for he shall SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS." Matt. i. 21. The Israel of God, or church universal, "hoping" in the same "mercy," and the same "plen-

"teous

"teous redemption," expecteth the full accompliſhment of this gracious promiſe, at the ſecond advent of her Saviour, when the penalty of ſin ſhall be taken off, and death be ſwallowed up in victory.

PSALM CXXXI.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm containeth 1, 2. a deſcription of true humility, and reſignation to the will of God, with 3. an exhortation to the practice thereof. It is, moſt probably, a Pſalm of David, and is eminently applicable to Meſſiah, in his ſtate of humiliation on earth. Happy would it be for the world, if all his diſciples could imbibe the ſpirit of this ſhort but lovely Pſalm, and copy after the example which it ſetteth before them.

1. LORD, *my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exerciſe myſelf in great matters, or in things too high for me.*

Pride beginneth in the "heart," and diſcovereth itſelf in the "eyes," the countenance, and the carriage; thinking nothing "too high for it," it is always aiming at ſtill "greater matters," ſcheming to be at the top of earthly grandeur; and when there, reſtleſs becauſe it can go no further. Of this diſpoſition the Son of David, like his father and repreſentative of old, was by his enemies affirmed to be; he

he was accuſed of affecting the ſovereignty, and therefore hunted and perſecuted even to the death. But how truly do theſe words of the Pſalmiſt delineate his real character? He was not "haughty," but "meek and lowly in heart;" his "eyes" were not "lofty," but kindly regarded the meaneſt object that preſented itſelf to them; he looked not to "great "matters," and "high things," but choſe to be and to be eſteemed the leaſt and loweſt of all.

2. *Surely I have behaved*, or, *ſubdued and quieted myſelf, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my ſoul* is *even as a weaned child.*

A child newly weaned mourneth becauſe of the favourite aliment which is withdrawn from him, but depending abſolutely on the mother for every thing, learneth to acquieſce in her treatment of him, and quietly to accept what it ſhall pleaſe her to give. Such was the humble reſignation of the Lamb of God to the will of his heavenly Father, under the ſevereſt diſpenſations, when even the divine preſence, and that ſupport which it afforded, ſeemed to have been withdrawn. "Father, into thy hands I com-"mend my Spirit!" Who then can expect to enter into the kingdom of heaven, "except he be convert-"ed, and become as a little child?" Matt. xviii. 3.

3. *Let Iſrael hope in the* LORD *from henceforth and for ever.*

After the example, therefore, of the King of Iſrael, who thus demeaned himſelf in his afflictions, lowly, contented, and reſigned, caſting all his care upon the Father who cared for him, and patiently waiting his time for deliverance and ſalvation; after this their

example

example and pattern, let his faithful people hope and truſt, not in themſelves, their wiſdom, or their power, but in Jehovah alone, who will not fail to exalt them, as he hath already exalted their Redeemer, if they do but follow his ſteps.

XXVIII DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXII.

ARGUMENT.

This is one of the Proper Pſalms, which the church hath appointed to be uſed on Chriſtmas Day. It containeth 1—5. a petition that Jehovah would be mindful of the zeal ſhewn by his ſervant David, in preparing a place for his habitation; 6. the exultation of the faithful upon hearing the glad tidings, that God would dwell among them; and 7. their reſolution to worſhip at the place which he had choſen for that purpoſe; 8—10. an addreſs to Jehovah, uſed by Solomon at the dedication of the temple, whence ſome have thought him to have been the author of the Pſalm; 11—18. the ſubſtance of God's promiſes made to David and to his ſeed. The whole Pſalm is perfectly well adapted to the feſtival of the Incarnation, as the following comment will, it is hoped, abundantly demonſtrate.

1. LORD,

1. LORD, *remember David*, and *all his afflictions*:

Iſrael beſeecheth Jehovah to be mindful of thoſe ſorrows and ſufferings, which had been undergone by his ſervant David, ere he attained to the throne, and eſtabliſhed the ancient church in the beauty of holineſs. That God would "remember" the far greater "afflictions" ſuſtained for our ſake by Meſſiah in the days of his humiliation, when through much tribulation he accompliſhed our redemption, and entered into his glory, is the petition preferred, in theſe words, by us Chriſtians.

2. *How he ſware unto the* LORD, and *vowed unto the mighty* God *of Jacob*: 3. *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my houſe, nor go up into my bed*; 4. *I will not give ſleep to mine eyes*, or *ſlumber to mine eyelids*, 5. *Until I find out a place for the* LORD, *an habitation for the mighty* God *of Jacob*.

In all circumſtances and ſituations, David was ſolicitous for the tabernacle and ſervice of God. Of the oath and vow here mentioned we have, indeed, no account in the ſacred hiſtory; but we read, 2 Sam. vii. 2. of the uneaſineſs which he expreſſed to Nathan the prophet, at the thought of his dwelling in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God dwelt only within the curtains of a tent. Nay, we find by 1 Chron. xvi. 43. that he did not bleſs, and conſequently, did not inhabit his own houſe, until he had brought the ark to Zion, where the temple was afterwards erected. He could take neither pleaſure nor reſt, until a place was prepared for the reſidence of Jehovah in the midſt of his people; and from thenceforth he gave himſelf, with unwearied diligence, to lay in a plentiful

tiful ſtore of the moſt coſtly materials, ſilver, gold, and precious ſtones, which were employed by his ſon and ſucceſſor Solomon, in conſtructing the magnificent and myſtic edifice. Thus, in the covenant of grace, did the Son of God engage not to take poſſeſſion of his heavenly palace, nor to enter into his eternal reſt, until he had prepared upon the earth a place for the reſidence of the Lord; a building framed of materials more precious than gold and ſilver, more bright and beautiful than rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. All this was planned and executed by one and the ſame perſon, who firſt ſuffered in meekneſs and patience like David, then reigned in glory and peace, like Solomon. The believer ſhould ſpare no pains, no time, no thought, to find out and prepare in his heart an habitation for the God of Jacob, ſince our Lord hath graciouſly vouchſafed to make this general promiſe to us all, "If a man love me, my "Father will love him, and we will come unto him, "and make our abode with him." John xiv. 23.

6. *Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.*

In other words, as Biſhop Patrick hath paraphraſed this verſe, "And now, behold, the Lord himſelf, "to our great joy, hath told us the very place where "he will fix his habitation, 1 Chron. xxi. 18. 26. in "the territory of Bethlehem Ephrata,* Gen. xxxv. "13, 19. in the fields of that foreſt, where the angel

* Jeruſalem, as Mr. Merrick obſerves from Geierus, being ſituated not far from Bethlehem, might be comprehended in the region of Ephrata; or באפרתה may be rendered "near "Ephrata."

"ſtood,

"ſtood, and directed David to build an altar to "the Lord." 1 Chron. xxi. 18. xxii. 1. Bethlehem Ephratah was the city of David; it was likewiſe the city wherein the Son of David was born, as the prophet Micah had foretold. "And thou Bethlehem "in the land of Judah, art not the leaſt among the "cities of Judah, for out of thee ſhall come a Go-"vernor, that ſhall rule my people Iſrael." Micah v. 2. cited by the chief prieſts and ſcribes to Herod, Matt. ii. 6. Chriſtians, as well as Jews, may therefore ſay, and upon the feſtival of Chriſt's nativity, uſing this Pſalm, they do ſay, "Lo, we heard of it "at Ephratah;" for there the angel firſt proclaimed the news of the incarnation to the ſhepherds; "Be-"hold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which "ſhall be to all people; for unto you is born this "day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is "Chriſt, the Lord." Luke ii. 10. there was "found" the true tabernacle and temple "not made with hands, "the place for Jehovah, the habitation for the mighty "God of Jacob."

7. *We will go into his tabernacles: we will worſhip at his footſtool.*

If this were the reſolution of Iſraelites, who ſaw the incarnation only in type and figure, how much more ought it to be ours, who live ſince the accompliſhment of that which was foreſhewn; ſince the Word, made fleſh, hath dwelt upon the earth, and the church hath been erected among the nations? If they worſhipped the God of Iſrael, who then dwelt in the holy of holies between the cherubim, ſhall not we worſhip the ſame divine perſon, who, though aſcended

up on high above all heavens, yet hath assured us, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them?

8. *Arise, O* LORD, *into thy rest, thou, and the ark of thy strength.*

When the ark marched before the children of Israel to find out a resting place, it is recorded, Numb. x. 36. that Moses said, "Rise up, Jehovah, "and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them "that hate thee, flee before thee. And when it rest-"ed, he said, Return, or Bring back the many thou-"sands of Israel." The verse before us was used, with the two succeeding verses, by Solomon, as the conclusion of his prayer at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 41. The purport of the petition, therefore, was, that the presence of Jehovah might rest upon Zion, and dwell in the house prepared for it, as the same presence hath since dwelt in Christ, and is to be with the Christian church to the end of the world.

9. *Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.*

The ark being placed in the temple, prayer is next made for the ministers of religion, that they might, through grace, be invested with righteousness as with a garment, and be both covered and adorned with a robe of inviolable sanctity; that spiritual joy might fill their hearts, and break forth in songs of praise to the Lord God of Israel. Let not those, who have obtained the evangelical priesthood, be exceeded, by the sons of Levi, in holiness and alacrity.

10. *For*

10. *For thy ſervant David's ſake turn not away the face of thine anointed.*

Solomon beſeecheth God, for the ſake of his favourite ſervant David, and the promiſes made to him and his ſeed, that he would not deny the requeſt of David's ſon, now "anointed" to be king over Iſrael, and, by ſo doing, confound, put him to ſhame, or "turn away his face." That this is the meaning of the phraſe, is plain from 1 Kings ii. 16. where Adonijah ſays to Bathſheba, "and now I aſk "one petition of thee, deny me not;" in the Hebrew, "turn not away my face." A Chriſtian aſked nothing, but in the name, and for the ſake of the Son of David, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, in whom all the promiſes are yea and Amen, and in whom whoſoever believeth ſhall never be confounded, or denied that which it is really good and profitable for him to receive.

11. *The* LORD *hath ſworn* in *truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I ſet upon thy throne.*

That this is a prophecy of Meſſiah, we have the authority of St. Peter to ſay; Acts ii. 30. "David, "being a prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn "with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, "according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up CHRIST "to ſit on his throne;" &c. This promiſe to David occurs, 2 Sam. vii. 12. and hath a twofold ſenſe, relating to Solomon in type and ſhadow, to Chriſt in truth and ſubſtance. See more on Pſ. lxxxix. 3, 4.

12. *If thy children will keep my covenant and my teſtimony*

timony that I ſhall teach them, their children ſhall alſo ſit upon thy throne for evermore.

The promiſes of God to Chriſt are abſolute; but to his "children," as well as thoſe of David, they are conditional, ſo that our intereſt in them depend-eth on our faith, our obedience, our perſeverance. "Behold," ſaith St. Paul, "the goodneſs and ſeve-"rity of God: on them which fell, ſeverity; but "towards thee, goodneſs, if thou continue in that "goodneſs; otherwiſe, thou alſo ſhalt be cut off." Rom. xi. 22.

13. *For the* LORD *hath choſen Zion: he hath deſired it for his habitation.* 14. *This is my reſt for ever: here will I dwell; for I have deſired it.*

How ineffable is the love of God to man, that he ſhould uſe ſuch expreſſions as theſe concerning his church! He is pleaſed to ſay, that it is his deſire to dwell with us; yet how little do we deſire to dwell with him! In Zion he fixed his abode, and there con-tinued, till the iniquities of Iſrael provoked him to forſake his holy mountain, and to give up Jeruſalem for a prey to the ſpoilers. Since that time, his taber-nacle has been removed into the poſſeſſion of the Gentiles. Forſake not this thy new Zion, O God, and deliver not us thy people, in like manner, ſinful as we are, into the hands of the enemy and the avenger.

15. *I will abundantly bleſs her proviſion: I will ſatisfy her poor with bread.* 16. *I will alſo cloath her prieſts with ſalvation: and her ſaints ſhall ſhout aloud for joy.*

That city, in which the King of heaven deigns to place

place his throne, can want no manner of thing that is good. There will be always plenty of proviſion for the body and for the ſoul. The poor will be ſatiſfied with bread, and to the poor in ſpirit, will be given the bread of eternal life. Salvation will God appoint for a wall and a bulwark around the prieſts and the temple; joy and gladneſs ſhall be heard within, thankſgiving and the voice of melody. What a dreadful reverſe of all this do we behold in the preſent ſtate of the once glorious, but now deſolated Jeruſalem! Let not any Chriſtian church, after what has happened to that city, be high minded, but let all fear.

17. *There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*

Biſhop Patrick hath well paraphraſed this verſe. "There, namely, in Jeruſalem, will I make the regal "power and majeſty of David to put forth itſelf "afreſh in his royal ſucceſſors: no ſooner ſhall one "be extinguiſhed, but another ſhall ſhine in ſuch "ſplendor, as ſhall give a luſtre to the name of that "anointed ſervant of mine, till the great prince, the "Meſſiah, appear:" then will the horn of ſalvation be raiſed up in the houſe of David, to ſubdue the empires of the world, and to vanquiſh all oppoſition; then ſhall the Branch of Jehovah bud into beauty and glory upon the earth; then ſhall the lamp of Iſrael become a ſun of righteouſneſs, burning and ſhining with luſtre inextinguiſhable, to all eternity. That this verſe doth myſtically refer to Chriſt, the Jews confeſs, as Dr. Hammond has obſerved. So ſaith R. Saadiah, "The Lamp is the King, which

"illuminates the nations;" and Kimchi, "The "Horn of David, is the Meſſias."

18. *His enemies will I cloath with ſhame: but upon himſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh.*

It is here predicted, that God would blaſt and bring to nothing every deſign formed to deſtroy the houſe of David, until King Meſſiah ſhould ariſe out of it, to ſit upon the throne of his father. In him all the promiſes centre, and the kingdom is eſtabliſhed for ever. "His enemies," who will not have him to reign over them, ſhall, at the laſt day, be "cloath-"ed with ſhame," and everlaſting confuſion; "but "upon himſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh," filling heaven and earth with the brightneſs of it's glory.

PSALM CXXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

This ſhort but pleaſing Pſalm was compoſed either to recommend unity among the tribes of Iſrael, or to celebrate it when it had taken place. Biſhop Patrick juſtly obſerves, that "it was as fitly uſed by the firſt Chriſtians, "to expreſs their joy for the bleſſed union "of Jews and Gentiles: and may now ſerve "the uſes of all Chriſtian Societies, whoſe "happineſs lies in holy peace and concord." It containeth 1. a rapturous exclamation on the comforts and advantages of union, which 2, 3. are illuſtrated by the two exquiſite ſimilitudes

ſimilitudes of the holy anointing Oil, and of Dew.

1. *Behold, how good and how pleaſant* it is, *for brethren to dwell together in unity!*

Many things are good, which are not pleaſant; and many pleaſant, which are not good. But unity among brethren, whether civil or religious, is productive both of profit and pleaſure. Of profit, becauſe therein conſiſteth the welfare and ſecurity of every ſociety; of pleaſure, becauſe mutual love is the ſource of delight, and the happineſs of one becomes, in that caſe, the happineſs of all. It is unity alone, which gives beauty, as well as ſtrength, to the ſtate; which renders the church, at the ſame time, "fair as the moon, and terrible as an army "with banners." Cant. vi. 10.

2. It is *like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard,* even *Aaron's beard: that went down to the ſkirts of his garments*; 3. *As the dew of Hermon,** and as the dew *that deſcended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the* LORD *commanded the bleſſing,* even *life for evermore.*

"Unity, beginning in the prince, and diffuſed "through the people, is here illuſtrated," ſaith Doctor Delany, "by two images, the moſt apt and beau-

* Biſhop LOWTH ſeemed fully to have juſtified our tranſlators in ſupplying the Ellipſis as they have done, and thereby removing the abſurdity of making the dew of Hermon, a mountain on one ſide of Jordan, towards the eaſtern extremity of Canaan, deſcend on the mountain of Zion, which was ſituated on the other ſide of Jordan, at Jeruſalem.

" tiful that ever were imagined. Kingdoms are con-
" ſidered as bodies politic, of which the king is the
" head, and the people, in their ſeveral ranks and
" orders, the parts and members. A ſpirit of union
" beginning upon the prince, whoſe perſon is ſacred,
" is like oil poured upon the head of Aaron, which
" naturally deſcends, and ſpreads itſelf over all the
" parts of the body, and diffuſes beauty and fra-
" grance over the whole, reaching even to the ſkirts
" of the garment. Oil is, without queſtion, the fineſt
" emblem of union that ever was conceived. It is
" a ſubſtance conſiſting of very ſmall parts, which
" yet, by their mutual adheſion, conſtitute one uni-
" form, well united, and uſeful body. The ſacred
" oil carries the idea and the advantage of union yet
" farther; which being extracted from various ſpices,
" yet made up one well cohering and more valuable
" compound. The next image carries the exhorta-
" tion to union, and the advantages of it ſtill higher.
" Hermon was the general name of one mountain,
" comprehending many leſſer and lower hills, under
" the ſurround of a greater. Union in any nation is
" the gift of God; and therefore unity among bre-
" thren, beginning from the king, is like the dew of
" heaven, which, falling firſt upon the higher ſummit
" of Hermon, (refreſhing and enriching where-ever
" it falls,) naturally deſcends to Zion, a lower; and
" thence even to the humble valleys. Zion was the
" centre of union to all the tribes; there God him-
" ſelf had promiſed his people reſt, and peace from
" their enemies; which, however, were of little value
" without

"without union and harmony among themſelves."* Thus far this learned and pious author, whoſe explanation of the Pſalmiſt's imagery, as deſcriptive of civil unity in the ſtate, is ſo juſt and elegant, that I could not forbear tranſcribing the paſſage at length. It only remains to be added, that theſe divine pictures receive an additional beauty, and the colouring is much heightened, by their being viewed in another light, as repreſentations of ſpiritual unity in the church. The Spirit of heavenly love was that oil of gladneſs which Jehovah poured without meaſure on him who is the High Prieſt and Head of his church. Inſinuating and healing, comforting and exhilerating, it is diffuſed from him over his body myſtical, even down to the leaſt and loweſt members; "of his ful-"neſs have we all received;" and, as it is ſaid of Mary's box of ſpikenard in the Goſpel, "the houſe "is filled with the odour of the ointment." Nor did the dew of heaven, in time of drought, ever prove more refreſhing and beneficial to the mountains of Judah, than are the influences of grace, when deſcending in ſoft ſilence from above upon the church; in the union and communion of which, God hath "commanded the bleſſing, even life for evermore." O come the day, when diviſion ſhall ceaſe, and enmity be done away; when the tribes of the ſpiritual Iſrael ſhall be united in a bond of eternal charity, under the true David, in the Jeruſalem which is above; and ſaints and angels ſhall ſing this lovely Pſalm together!

* Life of King David, Vol. III. p. 204.

PSALM

PSALM CXXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

With this Pſalm, Chriſtians in the church, like the levites of old in the temple, 1, 2. call upon each other to bleſs God, and 3. upon God to bleſs them all.

1. *Behold, bleſs ye the* LORD, *all* ye *ſervants of the* LORD, *which by night ſtand in the houſe of the* LORD. 2. *Lift up your hands* in *the ſanctuary, and bleſs the* LORD.

The firſt word in this verſe, "Behold," ſeemeth to point at the reaſons which the prieſts in the temple had to bleſs Jehovah; as if it had been ſaid, Behold, the houſe of God is built, the holy ſervices are appointed, and the Lord hath given you reſt from your enemies, that you may ſerve him acceptably; ſet about it, therefore, with gratitude and alacrity. We read, 1 Chron. ix. 33. that the Levitical ſingers were "employed in their work day and night;" to the end, doubtleſs, that the earthly ſanctuary might bear ſome reſemblance of that above, where, St. John tells us, the redeemed "are before the throne of God, and "ſerve him day and night in his temple." Rev. vii. 15. Chriſtians are the redeemed of the Lord, redeemed from the guilt and dominion of ſin, delivered out of the hands of their enemies, the world, the fleſh, and the devil, that they may become the ſervants of Chriſt. He hath built his church, and in it

it he wills that men pray, lifting up holy hands, and that they offer the ſacrifices of thankſgiving. "Be-"hold," therefore, "bleſs the Lord Jeſus, all ye "ſervants of his;" bleſs him in the chearful and buſy hours of day; bleſs him in the ſolemn and peaceful watches of the night; making melody, even then, in your hearts, at leaſt, if not with your voices. The pious Mr. Nicholas Farrer exhibited, in the laſt century, an inſtance of a proteſtant family, in which a conſtant courſe of pſalmody was appointed, and ſo ſtrictly kept up, that, through the whole four-and-twenty hours of day and night, there was no portion of time, when ſome of the members were not employed in performing that moſt pleaſant part of duty and devotion. The reader may ſee the curious life of this extraordinary perſon, as drawn up by Dr. Turner, Biſhop of Ely, in the Chriſtian Magazine, Vol. ii. P. 356.

3. *The* LORD *that made heaven and earth bleſs thee out of Zion.*

The two preceding verſes, as Mr. Mudge obſerves, ſeem directed to the prieſts of the temple, by ſome perſon, probably of conſequence, come up to pay his devotions. This third verſe is therefore returned, as from the prieſts. And thus it is, that prayer and praiſe, which by grace are cauſed to aſcend from our hearts to God, will certainly return in the benedictions of heaven upon our ſouls and bodies, our perſons and our families, our church and our country; like the vapours, which, exhaled by the warmth of the ſun from the bowels of the earth, mount upwards into the air; but ſoon fall again in fruitful

ſhowers,

ſhowers, cauſing the little hills to rejoice, and the vallies to laugh and ſing.

PSALM CXXXV.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, 1, 2. the ſervants of Jehovah are exhorted to praiſe him, 3. on account of his goodneſs; of the pleaſure to be found in the employment; 4. of his peculiar mercies ſhewn to Iſrael; 5. of his infinite ſuperiority over the gods of the nations, manifeſted 6, 7. in the works of creation, 9—14. in his dealings with the church, and with her adverſaries. 15—18. The folly of idolatry, and of thoſe who practiſe it, is deſcribed; and 19—21. Iſrael is again ſtirred up to praiſe Jehovah.

1. *Praiſe ye the* LORD. *Praiſe ye the name of the* LORD; *praiſe* him, *O ye ſervants of the* LORD. 2. *Ye that ſtand in the houſe of the* LORD, *in the courts of the houſe of our God,* 3. *Praiſe the* LORD; *for the* LORD *is good: ſing praiſes unto his name; for* it is *pleaſant.*

All the ſervants of God, they, more eſpecially, who miniſter in the temple, are repeatedly, as in the foregoing Pſalm, excited to praiſe their bleſſed Maſter. Two reaſons are aſſigned why they ſhould do this. Firſt, the goodneſs of that maſter, and ſecondly,

ly, the pleaſantneſs of the employment. The latter of theſe reaſons hath a natural and neceſſary dependance on the former. A ſenſe of the divine mercy will tune our hearts and voices to praiſe. We, who are upon earth, often find ourſelves indiſpoſed for the duty of thankſgiving, becauſe the concerns of the body, the cares and pleaſures of life, extinguiſh, for a time, this ſenſe in us, until grace, prayer and meditation render it again lively and active. In the inhabitants of heaven, who behold God without the veil of matter interpoſed, it is always ſo; and therefore, they reſt not day or night from finging hallelujahs, nor ceaſe one moment to rejoice in God their Saviour.

4. *For the* LORD *hath choſen Jacob unto himſelf,* and *Iſrael for his peculiar treaſure.* 5. *For I know that the* LORD is *great, and* that *our Lord* is *above all gods.*

A third reaſon why the children of Iſrael ſhould praiſe the name of Jehovah was the circumſtance of their having been ſelected from among the nations to be his church, to receive the law and the promiſes, to have his preſence reſiding in the midſt of them, and to be the guardians of the true faith and worſhip. And a fourth reaſon was the ſuperiority of Jehovah their God over the gods of the heathen, and conſequently over thoſe who worſhipped them; from whence followed this comfortable inference, that he was able to protect and to defend his people againſt every enemy that had evil will at Zion. Shall not we Chriſtians, then, praiſe the ſame gracious Lord, who hath choſen us out of the world, who hath given unto

unto us his Goſpel, who dwelleth in us by his Spirit, and who, by that Spirit, maketh us more than conquerors over our ſpiritual adverſaries?

6. *Whatſoever the* LORD *pleaſed*, that *did he in heaven, and in earth, in the ſeas, and all deep places.*

The preeminence of Jehovah above the gods of the nations is evinced by this conſideration, that he, at the beginning, created and formed thoſe powers of nature, whoſe operations in the heavens, the earth, and the waters, led the heathen world, after it had loſt the knowledge of the Creator, to adore the creature as independent. Let us praiſe him, who, in the intellectual, as in the material world, is Lord and King: who is obeyed by the angels in heaven, ſerved by the church upon earth, and feared by the ſpirits impriſoned in deep places beneath.

7. *He cauſeth the vapours to aſcend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treaſuries.*

They who in old time paid their devotions to the elements, imagined thoſe elements to be capable of giving or withholding rain at pleaſure. Therefore we find the prophet Jeremiah reclaiming that power to Jehovah, as the God who made and governed the world. "Are there any among the Vanities of the "Gentiles that can cauſe rain? or can the Heavens "give ſhowers? Art not thou he, O Jehovah our "God? Therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou "haſt made all theſe things." Jer. xiv. 22. Among the Greeks and Romans we meet with a Jupiter poſſeſſed of the thunder and the lightning, and an Æolus ruling over the winds. The Pſalmiſt teacheth us

to

to reſtore the celeſtial artillery to it's rightful owner. Jehovah, the God of Iſrael, and Creator of the univerſe, contrived the wonderful machinery of light and air, by which vapours are raiſed from the earth, compacted into clouds, and diſtilled in rain. At his command the winds are ſuddenly in motion, and as ſuddenly at reſt again; we hear the ſound, but cannot tell whence they come, or whither they go; as if they were taken from ſecret ſtorehouſes of the Almighty, and then laid up, till their ſervice was required again. The ſame idea God himſelf is pleaſed to give us, in the book of Job, where he deſcribeth the inſtruments of his power, as ſo many weapons of war in the arſenal of a mighty prince. "Haſt "thou entered into the treaſures of the ſnow? Or haſt "thou ſeen the treaſures of the hail, which I have re"ſerved againſt the time of trouble, againſt the day "of battle and war? By what way is the light part"ed, which ſcattereth the eaſt wind upon the earth? "Who hath divided a water courſe for the overflow"ing of waters? or a way for the lightning of "thunder, to cauſe it to rain on the earth?" Job xxviii. 22, &c. It is a great inſtance of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs, that lightning ſhould be accompanied by rain, to ſoften it's rage, and prevent it's miſchievous effects. Thus, in the midſt of judgment, does God remember mercy. The threatenings in his word againſt ſinners are like lightning; they would blaſt and ſcorch us up, were it not for his promiſes made in the ſame word to penitents, which, as a gracious rain, turn aſide their fury, refreſhing and comforting our affrighted ſpirits.

8. *Who*

8. *Who ſmote the firſt born of Egypt, both of man and beaſt.* 9. Who *ſent tokens and wonders into the midſt of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his ſervants.*

Egypt was the theatre of the grand conteſt between the God of Iſrael and the gods of the heathen. The ſuperiority of the former over the latter was ſhewn in every poſſible way by the miracles of Moſes, which demonſtrated all the powers of nature to be under the dominion of Jehovah, and to act at his command, ſo that, inſtead of being able to protect, they were made to torment and deſtroy their deluded votaries. See more on Pſ. lxxviii. 44, &c. The objects of a man's ſin frequently become, in the end, the inſtruments of his puniſhment.

10. *Who ſmote great nations, and ſlew mighty kings;* 11. *Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Baſhan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:* 12. *And gave their land* for *an heritage, an heritage unto Iſrael his people.*

The victories gained by Iſrael over Sihon and Og, in their paſſage to Canaan, and afterwards over the idolatrous kings of that country, are more proofs of the ſame point. For Iſrael therefore conquered, becauſe Jehovah fought for them, and put them in poſſeſſion of that good land, when the iniquity of it's old inhabitants was full, and cried to heaven for vengeance. The enemies we have to encounter, in our way to the promiſed inheritance, will alſo, if vigorouſly oppoſed, fall before us. "The kingdom of "heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it "by force." But it is God who fighteth for us, and with

with us, who giveth us the victory, and putteth us in poſſeſſion, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

13. *Thy name, O* LORD, endureth *for ever*; and *thy memorial, O* LORD, *throughout all generations.* 14. *For the* LORD *will judge his people, and he will repent himſelf concerning his ſervants.*

By the deſtruction of Pharaoh, with his Egyptians, and by the battles and victories of Joſhua; much more, by the overthrow of the ſpiritual Pharaoh, with his infernal hoſt, and by the battles and victories of the true Joſhua, Jehovah hath gotten him glory, and his name is magnified in the church, from age to age. The people whom he hath redeemed, may, indeed, for the chaſtiſement of their iniquities, be ſometimes delivered into the hands of their enemies, and oppreſſed by them. But it is only to ſhew them their tranſgreſſions, and lead them to repentance. When this effect is wrought, he is always ready to "judge them," to plead and avenge their cauſe; he "repenteth him" of the evil, and averteth it; he is intreated for the land, and becometh gracious to his ſervants.

15. *The idols of the heathen* are *ſilver and gold, the work of mens hands.* 16. *They have mouths, but they ſpeak not; eyes have they, but they ſee not.* 17. *They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there* any *breath in their mouths.* 18. *They that make them are like unto them:* ſo is *every one that truſteth in them.*

In theſe verſes is ſet forth the difference between the God of Iſrael, and the idols of the nations, as alſo between the worſhippers of each; all tending to confirm the truth of what was aſſerted, ver. 5. "I

"know that the LORD is great, and that our LORD "is above all gods." As the ſame words occur, Pſ. cxv. 4, &c. the reader is referred thither for the explication of them.

19. *Bleſs the* LORD, *O houſe of Iſrael: bleſs the* LORD, *O houſe of Aaron:* 20. *Bleſs the* LORD, *O houſe of Levi: ye that fear the* LORD, *bleſs the* LORD. 21. *Bleſſed be the* LORD *out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jeruſalem. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

He who proved himſelf ſuperior to the objects of ancient idolatry, is no leſs ſuperior to every object on which deluded man can place his affections. The Lord gave, and the Lord will take them away. Let "the houſe of Iſrael," therefore, and "the ſons of "Aaron," the church and the miniſters thereof, let all who "fear the Lord," bleſs and praiſe his holy name in the temple here below, until they ſhall be admitted to do it for evermore, in that which is above.

XXVIII DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

This is a delightful hymn of praiſe and thankſgiving to Jehovah, 1—3. God of gods, and Lord of lords, for the wonders 4—9. of Creation, 10—26. of Providence and Grace; which were probably celebrated in due order by

by one half of the choir, while the other half, or, perhaps, the whole in full chorus, took up the burden of each verſe, "For his mercy endureth for ever!" A form of acknowledgment, as Biſhop Patrick obſerves, preſcribed, by David, 1 Chron. xvi. 41. to be uſed continually in the divine ſervice. A form highly proper for creatures, and ſinful creatures to uſe, whoſe great employment it is now, and will be for ever, to magnify the mercy and loving kindneſs of their God.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD; *for* he is *good: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 2. *O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 3. *O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

We are called upon to praiſe Jehovah, firſt, for his own eſſential attributes; then, for the exertion of thoſe attributes in his works. The attributes here mentioned are thoſe of "goodneſs" and "power;" the one renders him willing, the other able to ſave: and what can we deſire more, but that he ſhould continue to be ſo! Of this likewiſe we are aſſured, by contemplating the unchangeableneſs of his nature. His diſpoſition altereth not, and his kingdom none can take from him: "his mercy endureth for ever."

4. *To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

All the works of God are "wonderful," and ſpeak him "alone" to have been their author. The eſta-

bliſhed courſe of the world is in reality no leſs admirable, than are thoſe extraordinary interpoſitions of omnipotence, whereby it hath been ſometimes interrupted and ſuſpended; though the latter, on account of their novelty, are apt to affect us more than the former doth, which is ever before our eyes, and therefore leſs regarded by us. How many of thoſe, for whom the wonders of Creation, Providence, and Redemption have been wrought, think none of them worthy their attention! Angels admire and adore, where man will not deign to caſt an eye, or employ a thought.

5. *To him that by wiſdom made the heavens: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 6. *To him that ſtretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

The heavens above, and the earth beneath, declare the wiſdom of their great Maker, and proclaim aloud, to an intelligent ear, the divinity of the hand that formed them. The heavens diſplay the love of God to man; the earth teaches the duty of man to God. Heaven is glorious and gracious, earth verdant and fruitful. The bright and ample circumference of heaven, the variegated ſurface of the earth, and the profuſion of good things that diſtinguiſh the ſeaſons, contaminated as they all have been by man's tranſgreſſion, even now yield a proſpect which annihilates all human grandeur. What idea, then, are we to frame of thoſe new heavens and earth, from which ſin and corruption are excluded, and where righteouſneſs hath fixed her eternal throne?

7. *To him that made great lights: for his mercy* endureth

dureth *for ever:* 8. *The ſun to rule by day: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 9. *The moon and ſtars to rule by night: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

Light is the life and ſoul of the univerſe, the nobleſt emblem of the power and glory of God, who in the night ſeaſon leaves not himſelf without witneſs, but gives us ſome portion of that light reflected, which by day we behold flowing from it's great fountain in the heart of heaven. Thy church and thy ſaints, O Lord, "are the moon and the ſtars," which, by the communication of doctrine, and the ſplendor of example, guide our feet, while we travel on in the night that hath overtaken us, waiting for the dawn of everlaſting day. Then we ſhall behold thy glory, and ſee thee as thou art.

10. *To him that ſmote Egypt in their firſt born: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 11. *And brought out Iſrael from among them: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 12. *With a ſtrong hand, and with a ſtretched out arm: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 13. *To him which divided the red ſea into parts: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 14. *And made Iſrael to paſs through the midſt of it: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 15. *But overthrew Pharoah and his hoſt in the red ſea: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 16. *To him which led his people through the wilderneſs: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 17. *To him which ſmote great kings: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 18. *And ſlew famous kings: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 19. *Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 20. *And Og the king of Baſhan: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 21. *And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy*

endureth *for ever:* 22. Even *an heritage unto Iſrael his ſervant: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 23. *Who remembered us in our low eſtate: for his mercy* endureth *for ever:* 24. *And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

From the works of Creation the Pſalmiſt proceeds to thoſe of Providence and Grace. He celebrates that mercy which reſcued Iſrael from oppreſſion, brought them out of the houſe of bondage, divided the ſea to make a way for them, ſupported and conducted them through a waſte howling wilderneſs, cruſhed the might and power of thoſe who oppoſed them, and at length ſettled them in the inheritance promiſed to their fathers. Eternal mercy hath in Chriſt Jeſus realized all theſe figures, and accompliſhed the great redemption, thus foreſhadowed of old. The Iſrael of God hath been reſcued from the oppreſſion of Satan, and brought out of the houſe of ſpiritual bondage. In the waters of baptiſm the old man of ſin is buried, and we ariſe triumphant, to ſing the praiſes of God our Saviour, who from thenceforth ſupports and conducts us in our paſſage through the world, ſtrengthening us in the day of battle againſt every enemy that oppoſeth us, until we enter the heavenly Canaan, promiſed to the fathers of our faith, and dwell for ever in the Poſſeſſion of Peace. When we conſider how God has thus "remembered us in our low eſtate," and thus "redeemed us from our enemies," can we be weary of repeating, "For his mercy endureth for "ever?"

25. *Who giveth food to all fleſh: for his mercy* endureth

dureth *for ever.* 26. *O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

The ſame bounty, which, in the natural world, provideth proper nutriment for every creature, hath alſo provided, for the ſpirits of all fleſh, the bread of eternal life. In either ſenſe, Jehovah "openeth "his hand, and filleth all things living with plen- "teouſneſs." Be therefore his praiſe as univerſal and laſting as his mercy.

PSALM CXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

The Iſraelites, captives in Babylon, 1—2. deſcribe their woful eſtate, and 3, 4. the inſults of their cruel maſters. 5, 6. They declare their inviolable affection for Jeruſalem; 7. pray that God would remember the behaviour of Edom; and 8, 9. predict the deſtruction of Babylon. The Pſalm admits of a beautiful and uſeful application to the ſtate of Chriſtians in this world, and their expected deliverance out of it.

1. *By the rivers of Babylon, there we ſat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*

What an inexpreſſible pathos is there in theſe few words? How do they at once tranſport us to Babylon, and place before our eyes the mournful ſituation of the Iſraelitiſh captives? Driven from their native

country, ſtripped of every comfort and convenience, in a ſtrange land, among idolaters, wearied and broken hearted, they ſit in ſilence by thoſe hoſtile waters. Then the pleaſant banks of Jordan preſent themſelves to their imaginations; the towers of Salem riſe to view; and the ſad remembrance of much-loved Zion cauſes tears to run down their cheeks; "By "the waters of Babylon we ſat down, yea, we wept, "when we remembered Zion!" Beſides the uſe which may be made of this Pſalm by any church, when, literally, in a ſtate of captivity, there is a ſenſe in which it may be uſed by us all. For Zion is, in Scripture, the ſtanding type of heaven, as Babylon is the grand figure of the world, the ſeat of confuſion, the oppreſſor and perſecutor of the people of God. In theſe, or the like terms, we may, therefore, ſuppoſe a ſinner to bemoan himſelf upon the earth—O Lord, I am an Iſraelite, exiled by my ſins from thy holy city, and left to mourn in this Babylon, the land of my captivity. Here I dwell in ſorrow, by theſe tranſient waters, muſing on the reſtleſs and unſtable nature of earthly pleaſures, which paſs ſwiftly by me, and are ſoon gone for ever. Yet for theſe, alas, I have exchanged the permanent joys of Zion, and parted with the felicity of thy choſen. Wherefore my heart is pained within me, and the remembrance of my folly will not let me reſt night or day. O Zion, thou holy and beautiful city, the temple of the Lamb, the habitation of the bleſſed, the ſeat of delight, the land of the living, when ſhall I behold thee? When ſhall I enter thy gates with thankſgiving, and thy courts with praiſe? The hope of a re-

turn

turn to thee is my only comfort in this vale of tears, where I am and will be a mourner, till my captivity be brought back, and my ſorrow be turned into joy.

2. *We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midſt thereof.*

The additional circumſtance, which the divine painter hath here thrown into his piece, is, to the laſt degree, juſt and ſtriking. It was not enough to repreſent the Hebrew captives weeping, on the banks of the Euphrates, at the remembrance of Zion, but, upon looking up, we behold their harps unſtrung, and pendent on the willows that grew there. The ſincere penitent, like them hath bidden adieu to mirth; his ſoul refuſeth to be comforted with the comforts of Babylon; nor can he ſing any more, till pardon and reſtoration ſhall have enabled him to ſing, in the temple, a ſong of praiſe and thankſgiving.

3. *For there they that carried us away captive required of us a ſong; and they that waſted us,* required of us *mirth,* ſaying, *Sing us* one *of the ſongs of Zion.*

4. *How ſhall we ſing the* LORD'S *ſong in a ſtrange land?* *

The Babylonians are introduced as inſulting over the Iſraelites, and ſcoffing at their faith and worſhip,

* Many ſingers were carried captives, Ezr. ii. 41. Theſe would of courſe take their inſtruments with them, and be inſulted, as here. Their ſongs were ſacred, and unfit to be ſung before idolaters. But the words, "How ſhall we ſing" &c. are not an anſwer given to them, but the free utterance afterwards of the feelings of the Jews among themſelves ANONYMOUS NOTES IN MERRICK'S ANNOTATIONS.

not

not without a tacit reflection on their God, who could not protect his favoured people againſt their enemies. "Now ſing us one of your ſongs of Zion; now let "us hear you ſound the praiſes of that God, of whom "ye boaſted, that he dwelt among you in the temple "which we have laid waſte, and burnt with fire." Thus the faithful have been, and thus they will be inſulted by infidels, in the day of their calamity. And "how," indeed, "can they ſing the Lord's "ſong in a ſtrange land?" How can they tune their voices to feſtive and euchariſtic ſtrains, when God, by puniſhing them for their ſins, calleth to mourning and weeping? But then, Iſrael in Babylon foreſaw a day of redemption; and ſo doth the church in the world; a day, when ſhe ſhall triumph, and her enemies ſhall lick the duſt. No circumſtances, therefore, ſhould make us forget her, and the promiſes concerning her.

5. *If I forget thee, O Jeruſalem, let my right hand forget* her cunning. 6. *If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jeruſalem above my chief joy.*

The whole nation may be ſuppoſed in theſe words to declare, as one man, that neither the afflictions nor the allurements of Babylon ſhould efface from their minds the remembrance of Jeruſalem, or prevent their looking forward to her future glorious reſtoration. If any temptation ſhould induce them to employ their tongues and their hands in the ſervice of Babel rather than in that of Zion, they wiſh to loſe the uſe of the former, and the ſkill of the latter. The thoughts and affections of true penitents, both in

proſperity

proſperity and adverſity, are fixed upon their heavenly country and city; they had rather be deprived of their powers and faculties, than of the will to uſe them aright; and the hope of glory, hereafter to be revealed in the church, is the flower and crown of their joy.

7. *Remember*, O LORD, *the children of Edom in the day of Jeruſalem; who ſaid, Raſe* it, *raſe* it, even *to the foundations thereof.*

The people of God beſeech him to take their cauſe in hand, and to avenge them on their adverſaries, particularly on the Edomites, who, though their brethren according to the fleſh, being deſcended from Eſau, the brother of Jacob, yet in the day of Jeruſalem's affliction, when the Chaldeans came againſt it, were aiding and encouraging thoſe pagans to deſtroy it utterly. Edom is charged with this unnatural behaviour, and threatened for it, by God himſelf, in the prophecy of Obadiah, Ver. 10. &c. "For thy vio-
"lence againſt thy brother Jacob ſhame ſhall cover
"thee, and thou ſhalt be cut off for ever. In the
"day that thou ſtoodeſt on the other ſide, in the day
"that the ſtrangers carried away captive his forces,
"and foreigners entered into his gates, and caſt loſts
"upon Jeruſalem, even thou waſt as one of them. But
"thou ſhouldeſt not have looked on the day of thy
"brother, in the day that he became a ſtranger: nei-
"ther ſhouldeſt thou have rejoiced over the children
"of Judah in the day of their deſtruction—For the
"day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as
"thou haſt done, it ſhall be done unto thee, thy re-
"ward ſhall return upon thine own head—but upon
"mount

"mount Zion ſhall be deliverance, and there ſhall "be holineſs, and the houſe of Jacob ſhall poſſeſs "their poſſeſſions." It may be obſerved, that the Jews afterwards acted the ſame part towards the Chriſtian church, which the Edomites had acted toward them, encouraging and ſtirring up the Gentiles to perſecute and deſtroy it from off the face of the earth. And God "remembered" them for the Chriſtians ſakes, as they prayed him to "remember Edom" for their ſakes. Learn we hence, what a crime it is, for Chriſtians to aſſiſt the common enemy, or call in the common enemy to aſſiſt them, againſt their brethren.

8. *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be deſtroyed; happy* ſhall he be, *that rewardeth thee, as thou haſt ſerved us.* 9. *Happy* ſhall he be, *that taketh and daſheth thy little ones againſt the ſtones.*

The ſubject of theſe two verſes is the ſame with that of many chapters in Iſaiah and Jeremiah; namely, the vengeance of heaven executed upon Babylon by Cyrus, raiſed up to be king of the Medes and Perſians, united under him, for that purpoſe. The meaning of the words, "happy ſhall he be," is, He ſhall go on and proſper, for the Lord of hoſts ſhall go with him, and fight his battles againſt the enemy and oppreſſor of his people, impowering him to recompenſe upon the Chaldeans the works of their hands, and to reward them as they ſerved Iſrael. The ſlaughter of the very infants, mentioned in the laſt verſe, is expreſsly predicted by Iſaiah, Ch. xiii. 16. "Their children alſo ſhall be daſhed to pieces before "their eyes; their houſes ſhall be ſpoiled, and their "wives raviſhed." The deſtruction was to be univerſal,

verſal, ſparing neither ſex nor age. Terrible, but juſt are thy judgments, O Lord! The fall of the myſtical "Babylon" is deſcribed, Rev. xviii. in terms and phraſes borrowed from this and other prophecies, relating, primarily, to the antient city called by that name. Whoever will carefully read over the Chapter referred to, with the three ſubſequent ones concerning the triumph of Meſſiah, and the glory of the new Jeruſalem, will be able to form proper ideas of the world and the church, and will know where to chuſe his portion.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm containeth 1—3. a reſolution to praiſe God for a deliverance vouchſafed; 4, 5. a prophecy that the kings of the earth ſhould glorify Jehovah for his mercy, ſhewn 6. in exalting the humble, and abaſing the proud; 7, 8. an act of faith and confidence in God.

1. *I will praiſe thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I ſing praiſe unto thee.* 2. *I will worſhip toward thy holy temple, and praiſe thy name, for thy loving kindneſs and for thy truth: for thou haſt magnified thy word above all thy name*; or, *thou haſt magnified thy name*, even *thy word, above all.*

In theſe verſes we evidently hear the voice of one whom God had delivered from a ſtate of great af-

fliction

fliction and danger, and who therefore determines to make the due acknowledgments in public; to give thanks "before the gods," that is, before "kings" and "rulers," in the great congregation; to "wor-"ſhip in the temple," and there to ſet forth the "loving kindneſs" and "truth" of Jehovah, in having accompliſhed the promiſed ſalvation, and thereby "magnified" his holy "name" and his faithful "word" over every thing that oppoſeth itſelf againſt it. The Chriſtian church cannot find ſtronger and more emphatical terms, in which to expreſs her ſenſe of the greateſt of all mercies, the redemption of the world by the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead. and his exaltation "above every name that is named "in heaven and earth."

3. *In the day when I cried thou anſweredſt me,* and *ſtrengthenedſt me* with *ſtrength in my ſoul.* 4. *All the kings of the earth ſhall praiſe thee, O* LORD, *when they hear the words of thy mouth.* 5. *Yea, they ſhall ſing in the ways of the* LORD: *for great* is *the glory of the* LORD.

From this part of the Pſalm it appears to be a prophetical one. The deliverance which it celebrates is of ſuch a nature, that when the glad tidings of it ſhould be publiſhed to the world, we are told, it ſhould induce the nations, with their princes, to adore Jehovah, to walk in his ways, and to chant forth his praiſes. The call of the Gentiles to the Goſpel is here foretold in words which cannot be miſtaken, and the redemption of the church, in Chriſt her head, is ſpoken of as the ſubject of thankſgiving among the kings of the earth. "In the day

"when

"when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthened me with ſtrength in my ſoul." For this reaſon, "All the kings of the earth ſhall praiſe thee, "O Lord," &c.

6. *Though the* LORD *be high, yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*

Humility is the way to ſalvation and glory. It is ſaid of our bleſſed Lord, that "becauſe he humbled "himſelf, therefore God highly exalted him:" and the great potentates of the world muſt tread in his ſteps, if they would be exalted with him. As to the proud, God "knoweth" and he deteſteth them; he beholdeth and keepeth them at a "diſtance."

7. *Though I walk in the midſt of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thine hand againſt the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand ſhall ſave me.*

Who doth not "walk in the midſt of trouble," while his pilgrimage is prolonged upon the earth! Who hath not "enemies" encompaſſing him on every ſide? O how comfortable, then, the reflection that he is with us, who can "revive" the dead; that we are under the protection of an "arm," which is almighty! Yes, bleſſed Lord, we believe that this ſaying of thy holy Pſalmiſt will be verified to every child of thine, even as it was to him, and to thy Son Jeſus, in whoſe perſon he might ſpeak it, as a prophet. Great indeed, were the "troubles," in the midſt of which the true David "walked" up and down amongſt us. He carried all our ſorrows, becauſe he bare all our ſins. "Yet didſt thou revive "him; thou didſt raiſe him from the dead, and exalt

alt him to thy throne in heaven, where he ever liveth to make interceſſion for us, that we, who in the days of our fleſh, do alſo "walk in the midſt of trouble," may be revived by thy Spirit, the giver of life and holineſs.

8. *The* LORD *will perfect* that which *concerneth me: thy mercy,* O LORD, endureth *for ever: forſake not the works of thine own hands.*

In troublous times, and the days of affliction, we muſt look back on that which God hath already done for us, and from thence draw an argument, that he will "perfect" that which remains, and not leave his work unfiniſhed: we muſt remember, that his mercies fail not, after a time, but "endure for ever" the ſame; and when we call to mind, that we are "the "work of his own hands," how can we think he will "forſake us," unleſs we utterly and finally forſake him?

XXIX. DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

It ſeems evident, from the latter part of this noble and inſtructive Pſalm, that the author penned it, at a time when he was perſecuted and calumniated, as an appeal to the all-ſeeing judge between him and his adverſaries. He takes the opportunity of expatiating in the

the ſublimeſt manner, 1—2. on the omnipreſence and omniſcience of him who 13—16. formeth man in the womb by his power, and 17. preſerveth him through life by his providence. He then 19, 20. expreſſeth his confidence, that God, as knowing all things, would deliver him from his enemies; 21, 22. he declareth his zeal and fidelity in the ſervice of his divine Maſter, by whom, 23, 24. he petitioneth to be proved, purified, and perfected in the way of holineſs.

1. O LORD, *thou haſt ſearched me, and known me.* 2. *Thou knoweſt my down ſitting and mine upriſing, thou underſtandeſt my thought afar off.* 3. *Thou compaſſeſt my path and my lying down, and art acquainted* with *all my ways.* 4. *For* there is *not a word in my tongue,* but *lo,* O LORD, *thou knoweſt it altogether.* or, *When there is not a word in my tongue, lo,* O LORD, &c. 5. *Thou haſt beſet me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.* 6. Such *knowledge* is *too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot* attain *unto it.*

The Pſalmiſt employeth a beautiful variety of expreſſions to denote his faith in the omnipreſence and omniſcience of Jehovah, to whom, in the latter part of the Pſalm, he appealeth, as the proper judge between him and his implacable enemies. He deſcribeth his God as having that compleat knowledge of him and his affairs, which, among men, the moſt accurate "ſearch," and the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny could not obtain; as being thoroughly "acquainted with

"all his ways," or proceedings, nay with his very "thoughts" while yet exiſting only in embryo, in his own mind; as watching and obſerving him at all ſeaſons, during the actions of the day, and his repoſe at night; and, in ſhort, as having ſo "beſet" him on all ſides, and "laid his hand upon him," that he could not move without his knowledge and conſent. When we reflect that "all things are thus naked and "open to him with whom we have to do;" that although he dwelleth in the higheſt heavens, he ſurveyeth not only the outward acts, but the very hearts and imaginations of men upon earth—muſt we not each of us cry out, "Such knowledge is too won-"derful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it;" I cannot admire it enough, for I cannot conceive of it aright!—"The actual, conſtant conſideration of "God's preſence would be the readieſt way in the "world to make ſin to ceaſe from among the chil-"dren of men, and for men to approach to the bleſ-"ſed eſtate of the ſaints in heaven, who cannot ſin, "for they always walk in the preſence, and behold "the face of God." See Biſhop Taylor's "Holy "Living." Chap. 1. Sect. 3.

7. *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence?* 8. *If I aſcend up into heaven, thou* art *there: If I make my bed in hell,* or *the grave, behold thou art there.* 9. If *I take the wings of the morning,* and *dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea:* 10. *Even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me.* 11. *If I ſay, Surely the darkneſs ſhall cover me; even the night ſhall be light about me.* 12. *Yea, the darkneſs hideth not from thee; but the night ſhineth as the day: the darkneſs and the light* are *both alike* to thee.

We

We can never ſin with ſecurity, but in a place where the eye of God cannot behold us. And where is that place? Had we a mind to eſcape his inſpection, "whither ſhould we go?" Heaven is the ſeat of his glory, creation the ſcene of his providence, and the grave itſelf will be the theatre of his power; ſo that our efforts will be equally vain, whether we aſcend, or deſcend, or fly abroad upon the wings of the morning light, which diffuſeth itſelf with ſuch velocity over the globe, from eaſt to weſt. The arm of the Almighty will ſtill at pleaſure prevent, and be ready to arreſt the fugitives in their progreſs. Darkneſs may, indeed, conceal us and our deeds from the ſight of men; but the divine preſence, like that of the ſun, turns night into day, and makes all things manifeſt before God. The ſame conſideration which ſhould reſtrain us from ſin, ſhould alſo encourage us to work righteouſneſs, and comfort us under all our ſorrows; namely, the thought, that we are never out of the ſight and protection of our Maker. The piety and the charity which are practiſed in cottages; the labour and the pain which are patiently endured in the field, and on the bed of ſickneſs; the miſery and torment inflicted by perſecution in the mines, the gallies, and the dungeons; all are under the inſpection of Jehovah, and are noted down by him againſt the day of recompenſe. He ſees, and he will reward all we do, and all we ſuffer, as becometh Chriſtians. He who, for our ſakes, cauſed his Son to deſcend from heaven to the lower parts of the earth, and from thence to aſcend to heaven again, will watch over, preſerve, and re-aſſemble the parts of our

bodies, though diſſolved in the grave, buried in the ocean, or diſperſed to the four winds. So that, with alluſion to this event alſo, a dying ſervant of God may exclaim, Whither can I go from thy ſpirit? Or whither can I flee from thy preſence? If, as to my ſpiritual part, I aſcend into heaven, thou art there, to receive me; if, as touching my body, I make my bed in שאול or the grave, behold, thou art there, to ſecure me. If I take the wings of the wind, or thoſe yet more expeditious ones of the morning, and am carried by them to dwell in the midſt of the ſea, inſtead of the bowels of the earth; ſtill ſhall I be under thy power and providence; even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me faſt, preſerving me for a joyful reſurrection, at the time appointed.

13. *For thou haſt poſſeſſed*, or, *formed my reins: thou haſt covered me in my mother's womb.* 14. *I will praiſe thee; for I am fearfully* and *wonderfully made: marvellous* are *thy works; and* that *my ſoul knoweth right well.*

That God ſeeth in darkneſs, and that from him nothing is hidden, his knowledge of, and power over our moſt inward parts, do plainly ſhew. He "formed," and he therefore "poſſeſſeth," as his own property, our "reins," and is, conſequently, privy to all thoſe affections and deſires which flow from thence. It was he who "covered" us in the womb, or, as it is elſewhere expreſſed, Job. x. 2. who "cloath-"ed us with ſkin and fleſh, and fenced us with bones "and ſinews." A work ſo aſtoniſhing, that before the Pſalmiſt proceeds in his deſcription of it, he cannot help breaking forth in rapture at the thought;

"I will

"I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonder-
"fully made!"

"Obſtupeo, et memet læta formidine luſtro,
"Divini monumentum operis!"—— LOWTH.

With awful joy I view this frame of mine,
Stupendous monument of power divine!

15. *My ſubſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret*, and *curiouſly wrought*, or *variegated, like needle-work, in the loweſt parts of the earth.* 16. *Thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my* members *were written*, which *in continuance were faſhioned, when* as yet there was *none of them.*

By the "lower parts of the earth" is undoubtedly to be underſtood the "womb," where the fœtus is gradually formed and matured for the birth, like plants and flowers under ground. The proceſs is compared to that in a piece of work wrought with a needle, or faſhioned in the loom; which, with all it's beautiful variety of colour, and proportion of figure, ariſeth by degrees to perfection under the hand of the artiſt, framed according to a pattern lying before him, from a rude maſs of ſilk, or other materials. Thus, by the wiſdom and power of God, and after a plan delineated in his book, is a ſhapeleſs maſs wrought up into the moſt curious texture of nerves, veins, arteries, bones, muſcles, membranes, and ſkin, moſt ſkilfully interwoven and connected with each other, until it becometh a body harmoniouſly diverſified with all the limbs and lineaments of a man, not one of which at firſt appeared, any more than the figures were to be ſeen in the ball of ſilk. But then

(which is the chief thing here inſiſted on by the Pſalmiſt) whereas the human artificer muſt have the cleareſt light whereby to accompliſh his taſk, the divine work-maſter ſeeth in ſecret, and effecteth all his wonders within the dark and narrow confines of the womb. The reformation of our corrupted and diſſolved bodies, which is to be wrought, at the laſt day, in the womb of the earth, in order to their new birth, will crown all the works of the Almighty.

17. *How precious alſo are thy thoughts unto*, or, *concerning me, O God! How great is the ſum of them!* 18. If *I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the ſand: when I awake, I am ſtill with thee.*

From the wonders of God's forming hand, the Pſalmiſt proceeds to thoſe of his all-directing Providence, which afford additional proofs of the divine omniſcience and omnipreſence. The "thoughts" and counſels of Jehovah concerning David, his appointment to the throne, his troubles, and his preſervation in the midſt of them, were "precious" and delightful ſubjects of meditation and praiſe, never to be exhauſted of the rich matter they contained. With theſe in his mind he lay down at night to reſt, and, "when he awoke" in the morning, his thoughts naturally recurred to the pleaſing theme; he began where he had left off, and found himſelf, in heart and ſoul, "ſtill preſent with God," ſtill ruminating on him and his works. The mercies of heaven in the redemption of the church, by the ſufferings and exaltation of the true David, according to the divine decree concerning him—how precious are they to believers! How great is the ſum, how far exceeding

all

all human arithmetic to number them! Let them be to us the conſtant ſubjects of contemplation, admiration, and thankſgiving, day and night; and let death, that laſt ſleep, find us engaged in an employment, which, when we awake, and ariſe from the grave, we ſhall reſume, and proſecute to eternity, in the preſence of God.

19. *Surely thou wilt ſlay the wicked, O God:* or, *Wilt thou not ſlay the wicked, O God? depart from me therefore, ye blood-thirſty men.* 20. *For they ſpeak againſt thee wickedly,* and *thine enemies take* thy name *in vain.*

David now draws the intended concluſion from the premiſſes, ſo largely expatiated upon in the former part of the Pſalm. As if he had ſaid—And wilt thou not, O God, thou who art every where preſent, ſeeing and knowing all things: thou to whom the juſtice of my cauſe, and the iniquity of mine adverſaries, are equally open; thou who haſt formed, and hitherto, in ſo wonderful a manner, watched over, and preſerved thy ſervant; "wilt thou not ſlay the "wicked," and deliver me, as thou haſt promiſed to do, out of their hands? I know thou wilt; "depart "from me, therefore, ye blood-thirſty men;" I truſt in my God, and will have no connection, in the way of treaty or friendſhip, with you. You are not my enemies, but thoſe of Jehovah, againſt whom, not conſidering that he is privy to all your words, and even to your thoughts, you "ſpeak" preſumptuouſly and "wickedly," and whoſe "name" you "take "in vain," no leſs when you do evil under a godly pretence, and call him to witneſs the truth of your

lies and calumnies, than when you openly blaſpheme him. Such ſeemeth to be the full import of theſe two verſes; and their application to the members of the church, when at any time in ſimilar circumſtances, is obvious.

21. *Do not I hate them, O* LORD, *that hate thee? and am not I grieved with thoſe that riſe up againſt thee?* 22. *I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

A faithful ſervant hath the ſame intereſts, the ſame friends, the ſame enemies, with his Maſter, whoſe cauſe and honour he is, upon all occaſions, in duty bound to ſupport and maintain. A good man hates, as God himſelf doth; he hates not the perſons of men, but their ſins; not what God made them, but what they have made themſelves. We are neither to hate the men, on account of the vices they practiſe; nor to love the vices, for the ſake of the men who practiſe them. He who obſerveth invariably this diſtinction, fulfilleth the perfect law of charity, and hath the love of God and of his neighbour abiding in him.

23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:* 24. *And ſee if* there be any *wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.*

In the firſt verſe of the Pſalm, David declared, that Jehovah had "ſearched him out, and known "him;" he concludes with a petition, that his proceedings, and even his thoughts, might be ſtill ſcrutinized by his Maker, in order to their perfect purification from any evil which might be in them, or adhere to them. Should the hotteſt furnace of adverſity

verſity be found neceſſary to purge the droſs from the ſilver, he refuſeth not to be diſſolved in it, and new formed, ſo that he might only become a veſſel of honour, fitted for the maſter's uſe here below, and vouchſafed a place afterwards in his temple above. "See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead "me in the way everlaſting!"

PSALM CXL.

ARGUMENT.

This Pſalm containeth, 1—8. a prayer for deliverance from perſecutors, and calumniators, their violence and their wiles; 9—11. a prophecy of their final deſtruction, and 12, 13. the ſalvation of the afflicted righteous. It was compoſed by David in his troubles, and is applicable to Chriſt and to the church, reſpectively, in theirs.

1. *Deliver me, O* LORD, *from the evil man: preſerve me from the violent man*; 2. *Which imagine miſchiefs* in their *heart*; *continually are they gathered together* for *war*.

"Evil and violent men" exiſt in all ages, to harraſs and oppreſs the ſervants of God; their thoughts are employed in "imagining miſchief" againſt ſuch, and their hands are ready at all times for the "war." Had we no enemies without, there are thoſe within, who are ever fighting and troubling us. We cannot put

put off our Chriſtian armour for a moment in this world, nor enter into peace and reſt, but by a happy death, and a joyful reſurrection. Then God will "deliver" us, as he delivered David, and our bleſſed Lord and Maſter, the Son of David, from their reſpective enemies.

3. *They have ſharpened their tongues like a ſerpent; adders poiſon is under their lips.*

Slander and calumny muſt always precede and accompany perſecution, becauſe malice itſelf cannot excite people againſt a good man, as ſuch; to do this, he muſt firſt be repreſented as a bad man. What can be ſaid of thoſe, who are buſied in this manner, but that they are a "generation of vipers," the brood of the old "Serpent," that grand accuſer and calumniator of the brethren, having under their tongues a bag of "poiſon," conveying inſtant death to the reputation on which they faſten. Thus David was hunted as a rebel, Chriſt was crucified as a blaſphemer, and the primitive Chriſtians were tortured as guilty of inceſt and murder.

4. *Keep me, O* LORD, *from the hands of the wicked; preſerve me from the violent men, who have purpoſed to overthrow my goings.* 5. *The proud have hid a ſnare for me, and cords; they have ſpread a net by the way ſide; they have ſet gins for me.*

David here deſcribeth the ſubtlety and induſtry employed by his enemies to effect his deſtruction, by lying in wait for him, as a ſkilful fowler doth for his game, ſo that they thought it impoſſible he ſhould eſcape their hands. Such was the conduct of the Jews, with regard to the Son of David. And O how refined

refined the policy, how unwearied the application of our ſpiritual adverſaries, to "overthrow our goings" in the path of life and ſalvation, to circumvent, and to deſtroy us for ever! How are "the ſnares, the "nets, and the gins," placed for us, by that cunning and experienced artiſt, who takes care that nothing ſhould appear in view, but the alluring baits of honour, pleaſure, and profit, while of the toils we have no notice, till we find ourſelves entangled and caught in them. Who ſhall preſerve us thus walking in the midſt of dangers? He to whom David, in the following verſes, preferreth his prayer, and teacheth us to do likewiſe.

6. *I ſaid unto the* LORD, *thou* art *my God: hear the voice of my ſupplications,* O LORD. 7. *O God the* LORD, *the ſtrength of my ſalvation, thou haſt covered my head in the day of battle.* 8. *Grant not,* O LORD, *the deſires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; leſt they exalt themſelves.*

Jehovah, the God of David, is alſo our God, and he is always ready to hear our ſupplications. He is our ſtrength, and hath often covered our head with the helmet of ſalvation, in the day of battle and open war with our ſpiritual enemies. Nor will he, for the glory of his name, grant their deſires, or permit their more ſecret "devices" and machinations to work the deſtruction of his people; leſt they exalt themſelves, as having fruſtrated his counſels for the redemption of his ſervants.

9. As for *the head of thoſe that compaſs me about, the miſchief of their own lips ſhall cover them.* 10. *Burning coals ſhall fall upon them; they ſhall be caſt into the*

the fire, into deep pits, that they riſe not up again. 11. *An evil ſpeaker ſhall not be eſtabliſhed in the earth; evil ſhall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*

The prophet, in theſe three verſes, predicted thoſe juſt judgments, which heaven will inflict on the ſlanderers and perſecutors of the righteous. Their lips, which uttered miſchief againſt others, ſhall be the means of covering themſelves with confuſion, when out of their own mouths they ſhall be judged. Thoſe tongues, which have contributed to ſet the world on fire, ſhall be tormented with the hot burning coals of eternal vengeance: and they who, with ſo much eagerneſs and diligence, have prepared pits for the deſtruction of their brethren, ſhall be caſt into a deep and bottomleſs pit, out of which they will not riſe up again any more for ever. Evil ſpeakers and falſe accuſers ſhall gain no laſting eſtabliſhment, but puniſhment ſhall hunt ſin through all it's doubles, and ſeize it at laſt as it's legal prey. Let theſe great truths be firmly rooted in our hearts, and they will keep us ſteady, in the worſt of times.

12. *I know that the* LORD *will maintain the cauſe of the afflicted,* and *the right of the poor.* 13. *Surely the righteous ſhall give thanks unto thy name: the upright ſhall dwell in thy preſence.*

That unjuſt and oppreſſive men ſhall, in the end, ſuffer proportionably to their deſerts, we are aſſured from this conſideration, namely, that the Almighty is the patron of the injured and oppreſſed. He will plead the cauſe of the meek and lowly, who are uſed by the world, as their bleſſed Maſter was uſed before them. A day will come, when, delivered out of all their

their troubles, they ſhall "give thanks unto thy "name," O Lord, and "dwell in thy preſence" for evermore.

PSALM CXLI.

ARGUMENT.

David ſeems to have compoſed this Pſalm juſt before his flight to Achiſh king of Gath; when he had a ſecond time ſpared Saul's life, but could truſt him no longer. See 1 Sam. xxvi. and xxvii. 1. 1, 2. He prayeth earneſtly for help, and intreateth to be heard, as when able to attend the ſervice of the tabernacle; 3—5. he petitioneth to be preſerved from the ſnares of idolatry, in the country whither he was going; 6, 7. he relateth his own conduct toward Saul, and that of Saul toward him; 8, 9. he profeſſeth his faith in Jehovah, and redoubleth his prayer to him; 10. he predicteth the deſtruction of his enemies, and his own deliverance. Many parts of the expoſition of this Pſalm, given by the late learned Mr. Peters, in his Critical Diſſertation on the Book of Job, have been adopted in the enſuing comment.

1. LORD, *I will cry unto thee, make haſte unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.* 2. *Let*

my

my prayer be ſet forth before thee as *incenſe*; and *the lifting up of my hands* as *the evening ſacrifice.*

The earneſt and repeated ſupplication for help, in the firſt of theſe verſes, ſufficiently declares the Pſalmiſt to have been, at the time, in a ſituation of the utmoſt diſtreſs. And the ſecond verſe as plainly ſheweth, that he was then at a diſtance from the tabernacle, where all the ſolemn prayers of the Iſraelites, together with their daily ſacrifices, were offered up. And therefore, with his face, probably, directed thither, like Daniel in Babylon praying towards Jeruſalem, he begs that God would accept of all which it was in his power to perform, namely, the devotion of his heart, and the elevation of his hands in prayer; that the one might aſcend to heaven, fragrant and well pleaſing, as the cloud of "incenſe" mounting from the holy altar; and the other, in conjunction with it, prevail inſtead of the "evening "oblation," for the deliverance of himſelf and his companions.

3. *Set a watch, O* LORD, *before my mouth; keep the door of my lips*; or, *a guard over the door of my lips.* 4. *Incline not mine heart*, i. e. *ſuffer not my heart to be inclined, to any evil thing, to practiſe wicked works with men that work iniquity*, or, *idolatry*; *and let me not eat of their dainties.*

David was now going to ſeek a retreat from the perſecutions of his maſter Saul amidſt a race of idolaters, who would be curious to obſerve all his words and actions, and would attempt to draw him in to be a partaker with him in their idol worſhip, or to ſuſpect him as a ſpy and an enemy, if he refuſed to comply

comply with them. He therefore beſeeches God to "ſet a watch before his mouth, a guard over the "door of his lips," that he might neither endanger his own ſafety by his imprudent carriage, nor violate his religion by any weak compliances. He intreats to be preſerved from that greateſt of all evils, the renouncing Jehovah to follow vain and ſtrange Gods. He deſires that he might not be guilty of this heinous and preſumptuous ſin, no not ſo much as in thought —"Suffer not mine heart to be inclined to any evil "thing;" that he might abhor to play the hypocrite, by joining in the abominations of the heathen, "the "men that work idolatry," though but in ſhew and appearance only; and that he might never be allured by the pomp and pleaſure of their feaſts, by their luxurious meats, and laſcivious rites, to mix in their religious feſtivals, to eat, and drink, and riſe up to play—"neither let me eat of THEIR dainties." A Chriſtian, living among unbelievers and ſenſualiſts in the world, hath abundant reaſon to put up the ſame prayers, and to uſe the ſame precautions.

5. *Let the righteous ſmite me*; it ſhall be *a kindneſs: and let him reprove me*; it ſhall be *an excellent oil*, which *ſhall not break*, or, *depreſs my head: for yet my prayer alſo* ſhall be *in their calamities*, or, *againſt their wickedneſs.*

David continueth his prayer, and beggeth of heaven, as one of it's beſt and choiceſt bleſſings, that if at any time, through the frailty of nature, he ſhould be inclined to yield to the abovementioned temptations, he might find, among his attendants, ſome "righteous" and faithful friend, who might, with a kind

kind ſeverity, check and "reprove" him. Such reproof, he ſays, would, at that ſeaſon, be to him as the שמן ראש the "chief," or moſt "precious and ex-"cellent oil;" See Exod. xxx. 23. it would not "de-"preſs his head," אל יני ראשי or cauſe him to "hang "it down," as people in ſorrow do, but it would be "the oil of gladneſs," refreſhing, enlivening, ſtrengthening, and enabling him to lift up his head above the temptation, againſt which he had been praying, and, with renewed vigour, would ſtill continue to pray; "for yet my prayer" ſhall be ברעותיהם "againſt "their wickedneſſes." The bleſſed effects of reproof, when given and taken as it ought to be, never, ſurely, were more exactly, or more beautifully deſcribed.

6. *When their judges are overthrown in ſtony places, they ſhall hear my words; for they are ſweet.*

Of this verſe, as it ſtands in our tranſlation, I know not what can be made. When literally rendered from the Hebrew, it runs thus—"Their judges "have been diſmiſſed in the ſides of the rock, and "have heard my words that they were ſweet." David, reflecting on Saul's cruelty, in driving him out of his country, to wander amongſt aliens and idolaters, very naturally calls to mind and mentions his own different behaviour towards that implacable enemy, whoſe life he had ſpared at two ſeveral times, when he had it in his power to deſtroy him as he pleaſed. "Their judges, or princes, leaders, generals," &c. according to the frequent uſage of the word in Scripture, נשמטו "have been diſmiſſed" (the common ſignification of the verb שמט) "in the ſides of the rock," when I had them at an advantage there; 1 Sam. xxiv.

xxiv. 3. "and have heard my words, that they were "ſweet*;" they only heard me expoſtulate with them in a manner ſo mild and humble, that even Saul himſelf was overcome, and "lift up his voice and "wept, ſaying, My ſon David, thou art more righte-"ous than I—The Lord reward the good for that "thou haſt done unto me this day." 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. Such hath been my conduct towards the ſervants of Saul. Yet how have my people, alas, been by them moſt miſerably butchered!

7. *Our bones are ſcattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth* wood *upon the earth.*

This, probably, alludes to the bloody maſſacre of Ahimelec and the prieſts that were in Nob, who, to the number of eighty-five perſons, all of a ſacred character, and all innocent, were inhumanly ſlaughtered together by Doeg the Edomite. Such havoc as this might well be compared to the cutting and cleaving of wood, like the fragments of which, the bones of the ſufferers lay ſcattered here and there upon the ground, as many of the bodies might be devoured, before pits were prepared, near the field of ſlaughter, for their interment. To feel the force of the Pſalmiſt's expreſſions in this verſe, we need not have recourſe to ſuch extraordinary ſcenes of tyranny and cruelty. The daily diſſolution and deſtruction of our bodies, in the common way, will be found abundantly ſufficient for the purpoſe. For who can attend the digging of a grave, and view the ruins then

* This is Mr. PETERS's interpretation of the verſe: and Dr. DURELL hath fallen upon the ſame.

diſcloſed, without exclaiming, "Our bones lie ſcat-"tered at the grave's mouth; as when one cutteth "and cleaveth wood upon the earth!" Indeed, Rachel hath often had occaſion to bemoan her children, thus untimely ſlain by the unrelenting ſword of perſecution. But let her refrain her voice from weeping, and her eyes from tears. Her children ſhall return again from the dead, and their bones ſhall rejoice and flouriſh as an herb. Jer. xxxi. 15. Iſai. lxvi. 14.

8. *But mine eyes* are *unto thee, O* GOD *the* LORD: *in thee is my truſt; leave not my ſoul deſtitute.* 9. *Keep me from the ſnares* which *they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquities.*

The principle upon which David acted, and ſupported himſelf under his troubles, was a firm truſt in God, and a ſteady reſolution to obey him. With confidence, therefore, he made his prayer, that Jehovah would keep him from the ſnares which Saul and his counſellors had laid for him on one hand, and from thoſe of the idolaters, among whom he was driven, on the other; that ſo he might not be left deſtitute and loſe his life, or, which he prized more, his faith. For it is remarkable, that in his laſt ſpeech to Saul, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. where he mentions the wicked policy of his enemies, who had contrived to force him into baniſhment, he mentions not the danger of his life, but only that of his religion—"They "have driven me out this day from abiding in the "inheritance of the LORD, ſaying, go ſerve other "gods;" intimating, that they had done what lay in their power to drive him to idolatry, by forcing him

him into a country, where he would have the ſtrongeſt temptation to it.

10. *Let the wicked*, or, *the wicked ſhall fall into their own nets together, whilſt that I withal eſcape.*

From the ſequel of the hiſtory we find that the hope and aſſurance here expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt were not vain. He eſcaped all the ſnares that were laid for him on every ſide; he lived to ſee the death of Saul, who fell in a battle with the Philiſtines, and thoſe Philiſtines ſubdued by himſelf and his ſubjects. So will the devices of all our enemies be in the end turned againſt themſelves: they ſhall fall and periſh, but we ſhall triumph, with our Redeemer, to eternity.

XXIX DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLII.

ARGUMENT.

The title of this Pſalm informs us, that it was a prayer of David, when he was in the cave, that is, moſt probably, the cave of Adullam, whither he fled, when in danger both from Saul and from the Philiſtines. 1 Sam. xxii. 1. It containeth 1, 2. a ſupplication; 3—5. an act of confidence in God at that ſeaſon of danger and deſtitution; 6. a tender complaint of his ſufferings, and 7. a petition for deliverance. Our tranſlators having render-

ed ſome of the verbs in the paſt tenſe, the liberty hath been taken to alter them, agreeably to the Hebrew, and to the tenor of the Pſalm, which ſeemeth to be an actual prayer, and not the relation of one.

1. *I will cry unto the* LORD *with my voice; with my voice unto the* LORD *will I make my ſupplication.* 2. *I will pour out my complaint before him; I will ſhew before him my trouble.*

The ſtate of David in the cave of Adullam was a ſtate of utter deſtitution. Perſecuted by his own countrymen, diſmiſſed by Achiſh, and not yet joined by his own relations, or any other attendants, he took refuge in the cave, and was there, alone. But in that diſconſolate, and ſeemingly deſperate ſituation, he deſponded not. He had a friend in heaven, into whoſe boſom he "poured forth his complaint," and told him the ſad ſtory of his trouble and diſtreſs. When danger beſetteth us around, and fear is on every ſide, let us follow the example of David, and that of a greater than David, who, when Jews and Gentiles conſpired againſt him, and he was left all alone, in the garden, and on the croſs, gave himſelf unto prayer.

3. *When my ſpirit is overwhelmed within me, then thou knoweſt my path. In the way wherein I walk, have they privily laid a ſnare for me.*

The meaning is, Though my thoughts are ſo broken and confuſed, that I am not able to counſel and direct myſelf in theſe ſtraights, yet thou knoweſt the path wherein I walk, thou art with me, and wilt preſerve

preſerve me from thoſe who watch all my ſteps, and lye in ambuſh for me. Such ſhould be at all times the confidence of believers in the wiſdom, the power, and the goodneſs of God, even when human prudence has done it's utmoſt, and is at it's wit's end.

4. *Look on my right hand, and ſee that there is no man that will know me: refuge faileth me; no man careth for my ſoul.* 5. *I cry unto thee,* O LORD, *I ſay, Thou* art *my refuge,* and *my portion in the land of the living.*

David beſeecheth God to conſider his deſtitute condition, to "look on his right hand," the place where the advocate uſed to ſtand, and to "ſee that there "was no man that would know," acknowledge him, and take his part; "refuge failed him;" there was on earth no patron, to whom he could commit himſelf and his cauſe; no one, דורש that would "ſeek, "require, or avenge his ſoul." Thus Dr. Hammond expounds the words in a forenſic ſenſe. How affectingly do they deſcribe the deſtitution of David in the cave, and that of the ſon of David in the day of his paſſion, death, and burial! Death will, in like manner, ſtrip us of all our earthly connections and dependences. But even at that hour, may we, each of us, "cry unto thee, O Lord, and ſay, Thou art my "refuge and my portion in the land of the living!"

6. *Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my perſecutors; for they are ſtronger than I.* 7. *Bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may praiſe thy name: the righteous ſhall compaſs me about; for,* or, *when thou ſhalt deal bountifully with me.*

This prayer of David was heard and anſwered; he

was delivered from his perſecutors, enlarged from his diſtreſs, exalted to the throne, and joined by all the tribes of Iſrael. The true David was delivered from his ſtronger perſecutors, brought from the ſepulchre, exalted to his heavenly throne, owned and ſubmitted to by the converted nations, who became the Iſrael and people of God. Nor let us fear, though we be brought very low, and our perſecutors, the world, the fleſh, and the devil, be at any time too ſtrong for us. God will deliver us from the bondage of ſin, and redeem us from the priſon of the grave, to join the great aſſembly before the throne, and there to praiſe his name for ever.

PSALM CXLIII.

ARGUMENT.

This is the ſeventh and laſt of the Penitential Pſalms; and as we are not informed of any particular temporal calamities, which gave occaſion to its being compoſed, we ſhall explain it according to the general uſe now made of it in the church, for which, indeed, it ſeems to have been originally and entirely deſigned. After the example of David, the penitent 1. maketh his prayer to God for pardon; 2. acknowledgeth the impoſſibility of any man being ſaved, but by grace; 3, 4. deploreth the lamentable effects of ſin; 5. comforteth himſelf with a retroſpect of God's

God's mercies of old; and 6—12. prayeth, in a variety of expreſſions, for remiſſion of ſin, ſanctification, and redemption.

1. *Hear my prayer, O* LORD, *give ear to my ſupplications: in thy faithfulneſs anſwer me, and in thy righteouſneſs.*

When Mary Magdalene waſhed the feet of Chriſt with her tears, he knew what the petition was which her ſoul deſired to have granted, and anſwered it, accordingly, before it was made in words, by ſaying, "Thy ſins are forgiven thee." Thus the penitent, without mentioning the ſubject of his requeſt, as being well known to God, begs that his "prayer and "ſupplication may be heard and anſwered," agreeably to the "faithfulneſs and righteouſneſs of Je-"hovah."

2. *And enter not into judgment with thy ſervant: for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.*

In the firſt verſe, the ſuppliant appealed to the promiſes of God, and his fidelity in performing them. Here he urgeth the fallen, ſinful, wretched ſtate of human nature, which hath rendered it abſolutely impoſſible that any ſon of Adam can be ſaved, ſhould God "enter into judgment with him," and exact the puniſhment due to his offences according to the LAW, inſtead of pardoning them by an act of GRACE. The thoughts of ſuch a trial are enough to appall the ſoul of the beſt man living, to make his fleſh tremble, and all his bones ſhake, as if he ſtood at the foot of Sinai, and beheld Jehovah ready to break forth upon him, in the flame of devouring fire.

3. *For the enemy hath perſecuted my ſoul; he hath ſmitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkneſs, as thoſe that have been long dead.* 4. *Therefore is my ſpirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is deſolate.*

We have an "enemy," who "perſecutes" us with unrelenting malice; he "ſmites our life down to the "ground," as often as we yield to temptation, and fall from our ſtate of holineſs, to grovel in baſe and earthly deſires; he "makes us to dwell in darkneſs," when he has thus withdrawn us from the light of heaven, which before illuminated us, while we walked in it; the ſpiritual life, for a time, is extinguiſhed, and we become, for all the purpoſes of faith and charity, "like thoſe that have been long dead. There-"fore," at the conſideration of this our ſad eſtate, when God has enabled us to ſee and know it, our "ſpirit is overwhelmed within us" with remorſe, anxiety, and deſpondency; and "our heart within "us," deprived of the comforts of conſcience, the joys of the Spirit, and the preſence of the Beloved, is "deſolate," forlorn, miſerable. To reſcue the ſinner from this diſconſolate and loſt condition, our bleſſed Saviour was forſaken on the croſs; "his "ſpirit was overwhelmed within him, and his heart "within him was deſolate; the enemy" was ſuffered to "ſmite his" precious "life down to the ground," and he "dwelt," for three days, in darkneſs, as the "men that have been long dead."

5. *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muſe on the work of thy hands.*

When ſin has thus laid us low, and, as it were, ſlain

ſlain and entombed us, we begin to revive, and to ariſe from the dead, through hope of forgiveneſs and reſtoration to the divine favour, by "remembering "the days of old, and meditating on all the works" of love and mercy, which Jehovah then wrought towards thoſe who were ſinners, like ourſelves. While we "muſe" on ſuch inſtances of his goodneſs, the reflection is obvious, Is he not ſtill the ſame gracious God? Will he not do as much for us, upon our repentance, as he hath formerly done for others, upon theirs? "Let us ariſe, and go to our Father!"

6. *I ſtretch forth my hands unto thee; my ſoul* thirſteth *after thee as a thirſty land.*

Prayer is the voice of faith. The ſinner who views his ſituation, and believes, on having conſidered God's works of old, that he ſhall be delivered out of it, will ſoon "ſtretch forth his hands," in ſupplication to heaven. His ſoul will gaſp and pant after that grace and mercy which deſcend from above, like the rain in it's ſeaſon, to beſtow refreſhment, beauty, and fertility, on a parched and "thirſty land." While we recite this verſe, let us not be unmindful of Him, whoſe hands were often ſtretched forth in prayer for his people, and whoſe ſoul thirſted after our ſalvation, even then, when he felt the extremity of bodily thirſt, on the croſs.

7. *Hear me ſpeedily, O* LORD: *my ſpirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, leſt I be like unto them that go down into the pit.*

Theſe words would come with propriety from the mouth of one in danger of temporal death. They are no leſs proper in the mouth of him who is in danger

of

of death eternal. Rather, they receive an additional force and energy, when uſed in this latter ſenſe.

8. *Cauſe me to hear thy loving kindneſs in the morning; for in thee do I truſt: cauſe me to know the way wherein I ſhould walk; I lift up my ſoul unto thee.*

The penitent prayeth, that he may "hear the voice "of God's loving kindneſs," ſpeaking pardon and peace to his ſoul, "in the morning," ſpeedily and early, after the long dark night of fear and ſorrow, through which he is paſſing. This he hopes, becauſe, diſclaiming all other reliance, he placeth his confidence in God alone; "in thee do I truſt." Nor is he only ſolicitous for the forgiveneſs of what is paſt, but for future direction in the courſe of duty; "ſhew thou me the way wherein I ſhould walk." And to the end that he may follow ſuch directions, he hath withdrawn his affections from things below, and ſet them on things above; "I lift up my ſoul "unto thee."

9. *Deliver me, O* Lord, *from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.* 10. *Teach me to do thy will; for thou* art *my God: thy ſpirit* is *good; lead me,* or, *let thy good Spirit lead me into the land of uprightneſs.*

He continueth to pray that he may be "delivered "from his enemies," the world, the fleſh, and the devil, from whoſe temptations he "fleeth," by repentance and faith, to the Almighty, to "hide" and protect him. He requeſteth to be fully inſtructed in the "will" of him, whom, as his Lord and his "God," he hath determined to ſerve and obey. But conſcious of his own inability to do the will of Jehovah, even when known, he intreateth the good Spirit

Spirit of God to "lead" him out of the mazes of error, and the pollutions of vice, into the pleaſant "land" * of truth and holineſs.

11. *Quicken me, O* LORD, *for thy Name's ſake: for thy righteouſneſs ſake bring my ſoul out of trouble.* 12. *And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and deſtroy all them that afflict my ſoul: for* I am *thy ſervant.*

The verbs in theſe two laſt verſes, as Dr. Hammond hath noted, ſhould be rendered in the future; "Thou ſhalt quicken," &c. and then the Pſalm will end, as uſual, with an act of faith and aſſurance, that all thoſe mercies, which have been aſked, ſhall be obtained; that God, for the ſake of his "Name," and his "righteouſneſs," of his glory, and his faithfulneſs in the performance of his promiſes, will not fail to be favourable and gracious to his ſervants, "quickening" them, even when dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and bringing them, by degrees, "out of "all their troubles;" going forth with them to the battle againſt their ſpiritual "enemies," and enabling them to vanquiſh the authors of their "affliction" and miſery, to mortify the fleſh, and to overcome the world; that ſo they may triumph with their Redeemer, in the day when he ſhall likewiſe quicken their mortal bodies, and put all enemies under their feet.

* Mr. MERRICK mentions the ſimilar phraſes of πεδιον αληθινας, and λειμων αληθειας, among the Greeks. Or ארץ מישור may ſignify "the land that is plain, and direct, even and "ſtraight," where he might purſue his intended courſe of piety and goodneſs, without fear of meeting with obſtructions in the way, or danger of wandering out of it.

XXX DAY.

XXX DAY. MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLIV.

ARGUMENT.

It appears, from ver. 2. and verſe 10. of this Pſalm, that it was compoſed after David's acceſſion to the throne. And it is evident, from verſe 5, &c. that he had more enemies ſtill to conquer, ſuch as the Philiſtines, &c. He therefore, 1, 2. bleſſeth Jehovah, and 3, 4. expreſſeth his aſtoniſhment at the divine goodneſs ſhewn to ſuch a creature as man. 5—8. He beſeecheth God to perfect his work, and ſubdue the remaining adverſaries by the might of his power. 9, 10. He breaks forth again into a ſtrain of thankſgiving, and 11—15. again returns to his prayers for the compleat redemption, and the proſperity of Iſrael. If we ſubſtitute in our minds, Meſſiah for David, the church for Iſrael, and ſpiritual for temporal bleſſings, the Pſalm will preſent itſelf to us, as a noble evangelical hymn.

1. *Bleſſed* be *the* LORD *my ſtrength, which teacheth my hands to war*, and *my fingers to fight*;

What David here acknowledgeth, with regard to his victories, and that ſkill or might by which they

were

were obtained, ſhould be likewiſe acknowledged by all earthly kings and generals, in the day of battle and conqueſt. For ſucceſs in our ſpiritual warfare, we depend on the grace of God, which alone can give us wiſdom and "ſtrength to have victory, and "to triumph againſt ſin, the world, and the devil." Even the captain of our ſalvation fought and overcame by a power that was divine. "Jehovah taught "HIS hands to war, and HIS fingers to fight." And "bleſſed," on that account, be the name of Jehovah, in the church, for evermore.

2. *My goodneſs*, Heb. *my mercy*,* *and my fortreſs; my high tower, and my deliverer; my ſhield, and* he *in whom I truſt; who ſubdueth my people under me.*

The "goodneſs," or "mercy" of God inclineth us, in time of trouble, to fly to him as to a "for-"treſs," or "tower," in which we find refuge; and when we have thus put ourſelves under his patronage, he becometh our "deliverer" from preſent danger; our "ſhield," or protector, againſt any that may afterwards ariſe; the object of our unlimited "truſt" and confidence; and, at laſt, the "ſubduer" of all oppoſition "under us."

3. LORD, *what* is *man, that thou takeſt knowledge of him? Or the ſon of man, that thou makeſt account of him?* 4. *Man is like to vanity: his days* are *as a ſhadow that paſſeth away.*

* That is, "who are merciful to me," the abſtract being put for the concrete, as in Pſ. xii. 1. Prov. x. 29. Ezek. xliv. 6. Hoſ. viii. 9. Dr. DURELL thinks we ſhould read חסתי "my "refuge," as in other parallel places.

After

After a thankſgiving for the works which Jehovah had wrought, followeth a reflection on the creature "man," for whom they were wrought. Such a reflection, introduced in the ſame manner, and almoſt in the ſame words, we meet with in Pſ. viii. 4. which paſſage, being cited by the Apoſtle, Heb. ii. 6. and applied to Chriſt, affords an argument, as Dr. Hammond hath juſtly obſerved, for a like application of the verſes now before us, in their more eminent, prophetic, myſtical ſenſe. For, certainly, if David, upon the remembrance of what God had done for him, could break forth into this reflection, much more may we do ſo, for whom the Redeemer hath been manifeſted in the form of a ſervant, and in that form hath humbled himſelf to the death of the croſs, to gain us the victory over principalities and powers, to put all things under our feet, and to make us partakers of his everlaſting kingdom. Lord, what, indeed, is man, אדם or what is the ſon of ſuch a miſerable creature, בן אנוש that thou ſhouldſt take this knowledge, and make this account of him! Man, who is now become like vanity, or inſtability itſelf; whoſe days are fleeting and tranſient as a ſhadow, which glides over the earth, vaniſhes, and is ſeen no more! Such was human nature; but the Son of God hath taken it upon himſelf, rendered it immortal, and exalted it to heaven; whither all will follow him hereafter, who follow him now in the paths of righteouſneſs and holineſs.

5. *Bow thy heavens,* O LORD, *and come down: touch the mountains, and they ſhall ſmoke.* 6. *Caſt forth lightning, and ſcatter them: ſhoot out thine arrows, and*

and deſtroy them. 7. *Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of ſtrange children;* 8. *Whoſe mouth ſpeaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falſhood.*

David, having celebrated his victories over ſome of his enemies, and extolled the mercy and goodneſs of God, to whom he aſcribed the atchievement of them, now proceedeth to requeſt a farther manifeſtation of the omnipotent arm in his favour, againſt other hoſtile forces, which ſtill threatened his country, upon his acceſſion to the throne; ſuch as the Philiſtines, Moabites, Ammonites, &c. See 2 Sam. v. and viii. Theſe are called, metaphorically, "great "waters," threatening to overwhelm and deſtroy every thing; and, in plainer terms, "ſtrange children," or aliens from the covenant of Jehovah, and the commonwealth of Iſrael; children who "ſpeak lies, and "work wickedneſs;" or, as Dr. Hammond interpreteth the 8th verſe, "whoſe mouth ſpeaketh, or "maketh profeſſion of vanity, שוא that is, idolatry; "and their right hand," that on which they depend for ſupport, the object of their confidence, "is a "right hand of falſhood," שחר and one that will fail all who rely upon it for help. Jehovah, the God of Iſrael, is therefore intreated once more to appear in the cauſe of his Anointed; to go forth, as of old, to the battle againſt the enemies of his people, with all the tokens of diſpleaſure and vengeance, diſmaying and putting to flight theſe "armies of aliens." In like manner, the church, or myſtical body of Chriſt, is inſtant in prayer for the final completion of her hope. She wiſheth for the glorious day, when her

her God and Saviour ſhall bow the heavens, and come down to judgment, cauſing the mountains to ſmoke, and flame, and diſſolve, and flow down before him; when his lightnings, thoſe arrows of his indignation, and miniſters of his vengeance, ſhall ſcatter the hoſt of darkneſs, and deſtroy the antichriſtian powers; when we ſhall be delivered from every enemy, and from all that hate us, and David OUR King.

9. *I will ſing a new ſong unto thee, O God: upon a pſaltery* and *an inſtrument of ten ſtrings will I ſing praiſes unto thee.* 10. It is he *that giveth ſalvation unto kings: who delivereth David his ſervant from the hurtful ſword.*

In the mean time, as the Iſraelitiſh church praiſed Jehovah for the mercies already vouchſafed to the ſon of Jeſſe, ſo do we daily magnify, with voices and inſtruments of muſic, that ſalvation which God hath effected for us, by the deliverance of his Son, our Lord, from death and the grave.

11. *Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of ſtrange children, whoſe mouth ſpeaketh vanity, and their right hand* is *a right hand of falſhood:* 12. *That our ſons* may be *as plants grown up in their youth*; that *our daughters* may be *as corner ſtones, poliſhed* after *the ſimilitude of a palace.* 13. That *our garners* may be *full, affording all manner of ſtore*, that *our ſheep may bring forth thouſands and ten thouſands in our ſtreets*; or, *fields:* 14. That *our oxen* may be *ſtrong to labour*; that there be *no breaking in, nor going out*; *that* there be *no complaining in our ſtreets.*

Prayer is again made for a continuance of God's favour, and a compleat victory over every enemy; the

the happy conſequences of which, in the eſtabliſhment of Iſrael, and the proſperity of Jeruſalem, are particularly deſcribed. Victory is productive of peace, and peace is the mother of all earthly bleſſings to communities, and the families that compoſe them; whoſe happineſs conſiſteth in a numerous and hopeful progeny of ſons and daughters; the former healthy and well nurtured, growing up, like young plants in a kindly ſoil, until they attain to their full ſtrength and ſtature; the latter, fair and virtuous, like ſo many tall, well-proportioned, highly poliſhed, and richly ornamented columns, gracing the houſe to which they belong. When to theſe we have added plenty of corn, and all other proviſions, in the granaries and ſtorehouſes; flocks and herds, ever thriving and increaſing; freedom from hoſtile invaſions, and domeſtic complaints, ſo that there be "no break-"ing in, nor going out," no irruption of aliens into the commonwealth, nor emigration of inhabitants to foreign countries, by captivity, or otherwiſe; we ſhall find ourſelves poſſeſſed of moſt of the ingredients, which enter into the compoſition of temporal felicity. Such felicity God promiſed to his people Iſrael, and beſtowed on them, while they kept his ſtatutes, and obſerved his laws. And therefore there is no reaſon for ſuppoſing, as the Fathers, with many others, have done, that theſe wiſhes for "ſons, "daughters, corn, ſheep, oxen," &c. are uttered by the "ſtrange children," the aliens and idolaters, mentioned in the 11th verſe. The good things of this world may fall to the lot of the righteous, who are diſtinguiſhed from the wicked by the uſe which they

make of them, when given; and by their meek reſignation of them, when taken away. Whatever be the will of God concerning our having or wanting theſe outward comforts, we know that we have, as the faithful ſervants of God in every age had before us, greater and more precious promiſes, a better and an enduring ſubſtance, pleaſures that fade not, and riches that fly not away, reſerved for us in a heavenly country, and a city which hath foundations.

15. *Happy* is that *people that is in ſuch a caſe:* yea, *happy* is that *people, whoſe God* is *the* LORD.

The Pſalmiſt concludes with pronouncing the happineſs of the Iſraelites, when in the ſtate of proſperity above deſcribed, and their far greater happineſs in "having Jehovah for their God," who, by ſettling them in peaceful poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan, and the Jeruſalem below, gave them a pledge and foretaſte of that love, which ſtood engaged by covenant to bring them and us to his everlaſting Reſt, in the Jeruſalem above.

PSALM CXLV.

ARGUMENT.

Hitherto, in this divine book, we have been preſented with checkered ſcenes of danger and deliverance, diſtreſs and mercy. The voice of complaint hath ſometimes been ſucceeded by that of thankſgiving; and praiſe, at other times, hath terminated in prayer.

But

But now, as if the days of mourning in Zion were ended, we hear no more of Meſſiah, as a man of ſorrows; or of the church, as deſpiſed and afflicted, after the ſame example, in the world. Henceforth we ſeem not to be upon earth, but in heaven, mingling with celeſtial ſpirits around the throne, and ſinging, as in the following Pſalm, 1, 2. the praiſes of our God and King; extolling 3. his greatneſs, 4. his might, 5. his glory, 6, 7. his juſtice, 8, 9. his mercy; 10—13. the majeſty of his kingdom, and 14—21. all his adorable perfections, and wondrous works. This is an alphabetical Pſalm. The verſe, which ſhould begin with the letter Nun, is wanting. But, as Dr. Hammond hath obſerved, it is not uncommon for one letter, or more, to be left out in an alphabetical Pſalm, as in Pſ. xxv. where ר being twice repeated, ק is certainly omitted. We ſhall therefore content ourſelves, with what we find in the original Hebrew, and in the Chaldee, without inſerting the verſe which is now read in the lxx, and other tranſlations. Biſhop Patrick mentions a ſaying of the ancient Hebrews, taken notice of by Valentine Schindler, that "He could not "fail to be a child of the world to come, "who would ſay this Pſalm three times "every day." Perhaps they who, while they

chant it in full choir, enter thoroughly into the ſpirit of it, do experience as lively a foretaſte of the next world, as can be experienced in this.

1. *I will extol thee, my God, O King; and will bleſs thy name for ever and ever.* 2. *Every day will I bleſs thee; and I will praiſe thy name for ever and ever.*

The ſame divine perſon, who was, in a peculiar manner, the "God" and "King" of Iſrael, now ſtandeth in thoſe relations to the Gentile Chriſtian church, and by her is "extolled" in the words of this Pſalm, originally compoſed and uſed for that purpoſe among the Iſraelites. Chriſt is our "God," who hath ſaved us, according to his covenant and promiſe; he is our "King," who hath ſet up the univerſal and everlaſting kingdom, foretold by Daniel, and the other prophets; who hath "all power "in heaven and earth;" and who "muſt reign till "he hath put all enemies under his feet, and ſwal-"lowed up death in victory." In the mean time it is the daily employment of us, his redeemed ſubjects and ſervants, to chant forth the praiſes of his ſaving and glorious "name," with which the church, on earth, and in heaven, will reſound "for ever and "ever."

3. *Great* is *the* LORD, *and greatly to be praiſed; and his greatneſs* is *unſearchable.* 4. *One generation ſhall praiſe thy works unto another, and ſhall declare thy mighty acts.*

The "greatneſs" of Jehovah, whether we conſider it as relating to his eſſence, or his works, is never to be

be fully comprehended by his ſaints, whoſe delight it is to contemplate "the breadth, and length, and "depth, and height;" Epheſ. iii. 18. the extent and duration of his Being and his Kingdom, the profundity of his counſels, and the ſublimity of his power and glory. Theſe are the inexhauſtible ſubjects of divine meditation, tranſmitted from age to age. And as the greatneſs of God our Saviour hath no bounds, ſo his praiſes ſhould have no end, nor ſhould the voice of thankſgiving ever ceaſe in the church. As "one generation" drops it, "another" ſhould take it up, and prolong the delightful ſtrain, till the ſun and the moon ſhall withdraw their light, and the ſtars fall extinguiſhed from their orbs.

5. *I will ſpeak of the glorious honour of thy majeſty, and of thy wondrous works.* 6. *And* men *ſhall ſpeak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatneſs.* 7. *They ſhall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodneſs.*

Thoſe works of God, which demand to be celebrated by the tongues of men, are here divided into three kinds. Firſt, ſuch as declare his glory, and excite our admiration, whenever we behold them. Of this ſort are the ſhining frame of the heavens, and all the bodies which move therein; the earth, with it's furniture without, and it's contents within; the magnificent and ſtupendous ocean, which flows around it; the different tribes of animals inhabiting both the one and the other; and above all, the conſtruction of man, the lord of this lower world. Under the ſecond claſs of God's works are ranged all thoſe which the Pſalmiſt ſtyleth his "terrible acts," or the exer-

tions of his power againſt his enemies; ſuch as, the deſtruction of the old world by water; of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; of Pharaoh and his hoſt in the red ſea; of the Canaanitiſh nations by the ſword; and the victory gained over ſin and death by the reſurrection of Chriſt. In the third rank ſtand thoſe works which have proceeded from the "goodneſs" of God, and his "righteouſneſs" in the performance of his promiſes. And among theſe we may reckon all the different ſpecies of proviſion, which have been made by providence for the bodies of men in the world, and by grace for their ſouls in the church. On any of theſe ſubjects meditation cannot be long employed, without breaking forth into wonder, gratitude, and praiſe.

8. *The* LORD *is gracious, and full of compaſſion; ſlow to anger, and of great mercy.* 9. *The* LORD *is good to all: and his tender mercies* are *over all his works.*

Mercy hath miſery for it's object, and is that attribute, towards which the eyes of a fallen world muſt naturally be turned. The Pſalmiſt hath, accordingly, introduced her laſt, with great pomp and ſplendor, ſeated in her triumphal chariot, and inveſted with a ſupremacy over all the works of God. She is above the heavens, and over all the earth, ſo that the whole creation findeth that refuge under the ſhadow of her wings, of which, by reaſon of man's tranſgreſſion, it ſtandeth in need. The original word for "his tender mercies," is רחמיו the ſingular of which, רחם ſignifies the "womb." The "mercies" of God towards man are, therefore, repreſented, by this word, to be like thoſe of a mother towards the child

child of her "womb." And this is the very ſimilitude which he himſelf hath made uſe of, in that moſt affecting and comforting paſſage of the prophecy of Iſaiah; Chap. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her "ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion "on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget, "yet will I not forget thee."—And now, what follows? Are ſuch "tender mercies" in God? And are they "over all his works?" Why then,

10. *All thy works ſhall praiſe thee,* O LORD; *and thy ſaints ſhall bleſs thee.* 11. *They ſhall ſpeak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;* 12. *To make known to the ſons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majeſty of his kingdom.* 13. *Thy kingdom* is *an everlaſting kingdom, and thy dominion* endureth *throughout all generations.*

As "all the works" of God, in their ſeveral ways, make a due return for the mercy vouchſafed unto them, and ſet forth his glory, ſo more eſpecially ought this to be done by man, who is the principal party concerned in the fall and redemption. The "ſaints" are the ſubjects of Meſſiah's kingdom; and of that kingdom it is their duty to publiſh to the world the bleſſings and the glories, to the end that when theſe are made known, the nations may be thereby induced to ſubmit their hearts to ſo gracious a ſceptre, and the dominion of Chriſt may become as univerſal in it's extent, as it is everlaſting in it's duration.

14. *The* LORD *upholdeth all that fall, and raiſeth up all* thoſe that be *bowed down.*

After having proclaimed the glory and eternity of the kingdom, the prophet draws a character of the

King, who, in the execution of his regal and paſtoral office, is ever mindful of the neceſſities of his ſubjects. To thoſe who, like Peter on the water, are ſinking under temptation, he ſtretcheth out his ſaving arm, ſupporting and "upholding" them by his grace; and to thoſe who, like the woman in the Goſpel, have long been "bowed down" with ſin or ſorrow, he holdeth forth a pardon, "raiſing" and ſetting them upright again by his mercy. The caſe is the ſame with regard to outward diſtreſſes, from which God either preſerves or delivers his people, as he ſees beſt for them.

15. *The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon.* 16. *Thou openeſt thy hand, and ſatisfieſt the deſire of every living thing.*

What a juſt and beautiful picture is here preſented to view! We ſee the whole animal world aſſembled before us, with their eyes fixed on the great King and Father of all things, like thoſe of a flock on their Shepherd, when he enters the field, in time of dearth, with provender for them. From the ſame divine perſon, as the Saviour of men, as the King, Father, and Paſtor of the church, do believers, with earneſt expectation, wait for the food of eternal life. And neither one nor the other look and wait in vain. To both he giveth their meat in due ſeaſon; "he openeth his hand, and ſatisfieth the deſire of every living thing."

17. *The* LORD *is righteous in all his ways, and holy*, or, *good, merciful in all his works.*

Thus, "in all his ways," or diſpenſations towards his creatures, whether in nature, or in grace, "Jehovah

"hovah is righteous," faithful and juſt, in extending his promiſed care, by making due proviſion for their wants; and "all his works," which, from the beginning of the world, he hath wrought in behalf of the ſons of men, are full of "mercy and loving "kindneſs."

18. *The Lord* is *nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.* 19. *He will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him: he alſo will hear their cry, and will ſave them.*

It is our happineſs to have a King, who is not, like earthly princes, difficult of acceſs, but one of whom the meaneſt ſubject may at any time obtain an audience, and be certain of having his requeſt granted, if it be made "in truth," without wavering, and without hypocriſy, with humble confidence, and with unwearied conſtancy, expecting ſalvation from God, from none but him, and from him only in the way of duty and obedience; "he will fulfil "the deſire of them that fear him."

20. *The* LORD *preſerveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he deſtroy.*

To protect his ſubjects, and deſtroy their enemies, is the finiſhing part of the regal character, as here drawn from it's great original in "the King of ſaints." By his grace he now preſerveth us from innumerable dangers and temptations, and gradually deſtroyeth ſin in us: and by his power he will hereafter execute, in the fulleſt and moſt extenſive ſenſe, this part of his office, "when the wicked ſhall be conſumed with "the ſpirit of his mouth, and deſtroyed with the "brightneſs of his coming." Then the bodies of the

the righteous, preſerved to a joyful reſurrection, ſhall be reunited to their ſouls, and both together, perfected and glorified, ſhall reign and ſhine with him for ever. Thus the Lord Jeſus Chriſt "preſerveth "all that love him," and maketh good his promiſe, "There ſhall not an hair of your head periſh." Luke xxi. 18.

21. *My mouth ſhall ſpeak the praiſe of the* LORD: *and let all fleſh bleſs his holy name for ever and ever.*

The Pſalmiſt, having now given the reaſons why he had reſolved to "extol his God and King, and "to bleſs his name for ever and ever," concludes with repeating his reſolution, and exhorts all the world to follow his example, in time and eternity.

PSALM CXLVI.

ARGUMENT.

In this Pſalm, the church is taught 1, 2. to prolong the praiſes of Jehovah, as her God and King; 3—6. to beware of truſting in the powers of the world, and to rely on the world's Creator and Redeemer, whoſe miracles of love and mercy, wrought for the children of men, 7—9. are enumerated, and the eternity of whoſe kingdom 10. is proclaimed.

1. *Praiſe ye the* LORD. *Praiſe the* LORD, *O my ſoul.* 2. *While I live* I will *praiſe the* LORD: *I will ſing praiſes unto my God, while I have any being.*

No

No ſooner is one Hallelujah ended, but another begins; and the prophet, in imitation of thoſe who "reſt not day or night," ſtirs himſelf up afreſh to praiſe the King of glory, the Creator and Redeemer of men, declaring himſelf reſolved to employ the powers and faculties of his ſoul in the ſervice of that God, who gave and preſerved them.

3. *Put not your truſt in princes*, nor *in the ſon of man, in whom* there is *no help.* 4. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts periſh.* 5. *Happy* is he *that* hath *the God of Jacob for his help, whoſe hope* is *in the* LORD *his God:* 6. *Which made heaven, and earth, the ſea, and all that therein* is: *which keepeth truth for ever:*

From Him, who is "the prince of the kings of "the earth," Sion looks for deliverance, and by Him her true ſons expect to be exalted. HE "keepeth "truth for ever;" he is able and willing to perform his promiſes, and never diſappoints thoſe who rely on him. There are no changes in the politics of heaven. The faithful ſervant of his maſter is by that maſter infallibly approved and rewarded. Earthly princes, if they have the will, often want the power, even to protect their friends. And ſhould they want neither will nor power to advance them, yet ſtill all depends upon the breath in their noſtrils, which, perhaps, at the very critical moment, "goeth forth; they return "to their earth; their thoughts," and all the thoughts of thoſe who had hoped to riſe by their means, fall into the ſame grave, and are buried with them for ever. "Ceaſe ye from man, whoſe breath is in his "noſtrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

But

"But truſt ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord "Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength." Iſai. ii. 22. xxvi. 4.

7. *Which executeth judgment for the oppreſſed: which giveth food to the hungry. The* LORD *looſeth the priſoners:* 8. *The* LORD *openeth* the eyes of *the blind: the* LORD *raiſeth them that are bowed down: the* LORD *loveth the righteous:* 9. *The* LORD *preſerveth the ſtrangers; he relieveth the fatherleſs and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upſide down.*

That the Lord, of whom all theſe things are ſpoken, is the Meſſiah, or Jehovah incarnate, appears, as Dr. Hammond hath juſtly obſerved, from what is ſaid of him in verſe 8. "The Lord openeth the eyes "of the blind;" the miracle of reſtoring ſight to men born blind being one reſerved for the Son of God to work, at his coming in the fleſh. "Since "the world began," ſaith the man to whom ſight had been thus reſtored, "was it not heard, that any man "opened the eyes of one that was born blind." John ix. 32. This therefore was the firſt of thoſe tokens given by Jeſus to the diſciples of John, whereby it might be known that he was the expected Chriſt; "Go and tell John the things which ye have heard "and ſeen; The blind receive their ſight," &c. But how did this evince him to be the Meſſiah? Plainly, becauſe it had been foretold by the prophets, (as in Iſaiah xxxv. 5. xxix. 18. xlii. 18. ſo in this paſſage of our Pſalm, which is exactly ſimilar to thoſe texts), that Meſſiah, when he came, ſhould give ſight to the blind. Now, if one part of the Pſalmiſt's deſcription belong to Chriſt, the other members of it muſt do ſo likewiſe, it being evident that the whole is

ſpoken

ſpoken of the ſame perſon. He, therefore, is "the "God of Jacob, who made heaven and earth, the "ſea, and all that therein is;" and upon his appearing among men in the body of our fleſh, he ſhewed himſelf poſſeſſed of power to relieve all the wants, corporeal and ſpiritual, of poor loſt mankind. When he reſcued men from the bondage of Satan, he "exe-"cuted judgment for the oppreſſed;" when he fed thouſands by a miracle, or when he preached the word to ſuch as deſired to hear and receive it, he "gave food to the hungry:" when, by pardon and grace, he releaſed thoſe who were bound with the chains of their ſins, he "looſed the priſoners: when he poured light into the ſightleſs eye-ball, or illuminated with ſaving knowledge the underſtanding of the ignorant, he "opened the eyes of the blind:" when he made the crooked woman ſtraight, or rectified the obliquity of a depraved will, he "raiſed thoſe that "were bowed down:" while he protecteth, and guideth to the city of their eternal habitation, the ſons of Adam, who are exiles, pilgrims, and ſojourners upon earth, he "preſerveth the ſtrangers;" when he became a huſband to the church, and a parent to her deſtitute children, he "relieved the fatherleſs and "widow:" and when he ſhall come in his glorious majeſty, to reward his ſervants, and to confound their enemies, it will be ſeen how he "loveth the righte-"ous, and turneth the way of the wicked upſide "down." Happy the people of ſuch a God; happy the ſubjects of ſuch a King! Rejoice, and ſing, and ſhout aloud; for lo,

10. *The* LORD *ſhall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

PSALM

XXX DAY. EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLVII.

ARGUMENT.

It hath been conjectured, from ver. 2. that this Pſalm was written to celebrate the return of Iſrael from Babylon, when Jeruſalem and the temple were rebuilt. 1—3. The people of God are exhorted to praiſe him for the mercies vouchſafed to them; 4—6. for his wiſdom, power, and goodneſs; 7—9. for his providential care, and 10, 11. the wonderful ſalvation wrought by his arm; 12—14. for the ſecurity, increaſe, and proſperity of the church; 15—18. for the happy change of her condition, like that produced in nature, when ſpring ſucceeds to winter; 19, 20. and for the glorious privilege of the divine word, revealed and committed to her.

1. *Praiſe ye the* LORD: *for* it is *good to ſing praiſes unto our God*; *for* it is *pleaſant*; and *praiſe is comely.*

Praiſe is "good" and acceptable to God our Saviour, whoſe glory is the great end of man's creation and redemption: and it is "pleaſant and comely" for man, being the only return he can make for thoſe, and all other mercies; the offspring of gratitude, and the expreſſion of love; the elevation of the ſoul, and the

the antepaſt of heaven; it's own reward in this life, and an introduction to the felicities of the next.

2. *The* LORD *doth build up Jeruſalem: he gathereth together the outcaſts of Iſrael.*

If this Pſalm were written on occaſion of the return from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the earthly city, the ideas are to be transferred, as in other Pſalms of the ſame kind, to a more important reſtoration from a much worſe captivity, and to the building up of the church under the Goſpel, when Chriſt "gathered "together in one the children of God that were ſcat-"tered abroad;" John xi. 52. that is, in the words of our Pſalm, he "gathered together the outcaſts of "Iſrael." So ſhall he again, at the reſurrection, "gather together his elect from the four winds," Matt. xxiv. 31. and "build up a Jeruſalem," in which they ſhall ſerve and praiſe him for ever.

3. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*

The "broken hearts and wounded ſpirits" of the Iſraelites were "healed and made whole," when they returned to their own land, when they beheld Jeruſalem riſing again in beauteous majeſty, and ſung the ſongs of Zion in the courts of the temple. Thus Chriſt came "to preach deliverance to the captives, "and to bind up the broken hearted;" Iſai. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. to ſpeak pardon and peace to the wounded and contrite ſpirit, and to put a new ſong of thankſgiving in the mouth of the penitent, which he might ſing, when reſtored to the holy city, and the houſe of his heavenly Father. The hour is coming, when God ſhall heal the breaches which death has made

made in the bodies of this people, and tranſlate them likewiſe from Babylon to Jeruſalem.

4. *He telleth the number of the ſtars: he calleth them all by* their *names.*

And he who does this, cannot be ignorant of the ſituation and circumſtances of his elect. He knoweth each individual, and numbereth all the atoms which go to the compoſition of his frame. He can call his ſaints, from the depths of earth and ſea, "by "their names," as when once "he cried with a loud "voice, Lazarus, come forth;" and he can fix them in radiant circles round his throne in the kingdom of glory, vying, for multitude as well as ſplendor, with thoſe bright orbs which glitter by night in the ſpangled firmament of heaven; ſo that what Baruch ſaith of the ſtars, may well be applied to the ſeed of Abraham, of whom it was foretold, that they ſhould equal the ſtars in number; Gen. xv. 5. "The ſtars "ſhine in their watches, and rejoice; when he call-"eth them, they ſay, Here we be; and ſo with "chearfulneſs they ſhew light unto him that made "them." Baruch iii. 34.

5. *Great* is *our Lord, and of great power: his underſtanding* is *infinite:* Heb. *of his underſtanding there is no number,* or *computation*; אין מספר.

This is a proper concluſion drawn from the former part of the Pſalm, and eſpecially from the preceding verſe. The greatneſs of God's power, which overcometh all difficulties to effect the ſalvation of his people, is not to be graſped by the human mind; and that wiſdom which numbers the ſtars of heaven, and the ſand of the ſea, and the generations of the

ſons

ſons of Abraham, can itſelf be ſubject to the rules of no arithmetic.

6. *The* LORD *lifteth up the meek: he caſteth the wicked down to the ground.*

To exalt and reward the humble, penitent, believing, and obedient; to depreſs and puniſh the proud, impenitent, unbelieving, and diſobedient; theſe are the meaſures and ends of all the divine diſpenſations. And as a man ranks himſelf in one or other of theſe two diviſions, he may expect from heaven ſtorm or ſunſhine, mercy or judgment.

7. *Sing unto the* LORD *with thankſgiving; ſing praiſe upon the harp unto our God:* 8. *Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh graſs to grow upon the mountains.* 9. *He giveth to the beaſt his food,* and *to the young ravens which cry.*

The faithful praiſe God for his goodneſs to the animal world, both on account of that goodneſs in itſelf, and alſo becauſe they behold therein an emblem and aſſurance of his mercy to themſelves. The watchful care of Providence over all creatures ſpeaks the ſame language to us, which Jehovah made uſe of to Joſhua, and which the Apoſtle hath applied to Chriſtians; "I will never leave thee, nor forſake "thee." Joſh. i. 5. Heb. xiii. 5. He who, by ſending rain on the mountains, which could not otherwiſe be watered, provideth food for the wild beaſts inhabiting thoſe mountains, will never leave the lambs of his flock deſtitute. And he who feedeth the young of the unclean raven, when they cry, and, as it were, in their way, call upon him for a ſupply of their

wants, will he, in the day of dearth and calamity, forſake the meek and harmleſs dove, that mourneth continually in prayer before him? The deſponding ſervant of God need only therefore put to himſelf the queſtion which we find aſked by the Creator, in the book of Job, Chap. xxxviii. 41. "Who pro-"videth for the raven his food? When his young "ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat;" they wander and find it. Our Lord preſſed this argument on his diſciples; Luke xii. 24. "Conſider "the ravens;" Matt. vi. 26. "Behold the fowls of "the air; for they ſow not, neither do they reap, "nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father "feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

Behold, and look away your low deſpair;
See the light tenants of the barren air:
To them, nor ſtores, nor granaries belong,
Nought but the woodland, and the pleaſing ſong;
Yet, your kind heav'nly Father bends his eye
On the leaſt wing that flits along the ſky.
To him they ſing, when ſpring renews the plain,
To him they cry, in winter's pinching reign;
Nor is their muſic, nor their plaint, in vain:
He hears the gay, and the diſtreſsful call,
And with unſparing bounty fills them all.
Will he not care for you, ye faithleſs, ſay?
Is he unwiſe? Or, are ye leſs than they?

THOMSON.

10. *He delighteth not in the ſtrength of the horſe: he taketh not pleaſure in the legs of a man.* 11. *The* LORD

taketh

taketh pleaſure in them that fear him, in thoſe that hope in his mercy.

If, therefore, the inference deduced above be a juſt one, namely, that God, who takes care of the wild beaſts, and the birds of the air, will ſupport and defend his church, then, however weak ſhe may be, and however ſtrong her adverſaries may be, yet ſhe may reſt ſecure, as having him on her ſide, to whom it is equal, to ſave by many, or by few; who giveth not the victory to the pomp and pride of carnal ſtrength, to thouſands, or ten thouſands, but to "thoſe who fear him, and hope in his mercy." The hiſtory of Iſrael is one continual exemplification of this truth; and, in our ſpiritual warfare, "this is "the victory which overcometh the world, even our "FAITH." John v. 4.

12. *Praiſe the* LORD, *O Jeruſalem; praiſe thy God, O Zion.* 13. *For he hath ſtrengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath bleſſed thy children within thee.* 14. *He maketh peace* in *thy borders,* and *filleth thee with the fineſt of the wheat.*

The church, like Jeruſalem of old, erected and preſerved by the wiſdom, and power, and goodneſs of God, is exhorted to praiſe him for all the benefits and bleſſings vouchſafed unto her; for the increaſe of "her children within her;" for the "peace" which ſhe at any time enjoyeth "in her borders," while ſhe is here below; for the plentiful proviſion made by her paſtors, to ſatisfy the needs of thoſe who "hun-"ger and thirſt after righteouſneſs;" and for the protection of the Almighty, "ſtrengthening the bars of "her gates," and ſecuring to her the poſſeſſion of all

theſe comforts; which, in the heavenly Jeruſalem, ſhall be rendered perfect and indefeaſible for evermore.

15. *He ſendeth forth his commandment* upon *earth: his word runneth very ſwiftly.* 16. *He giveth ſnow like wool: he ſcattereth the hoar froſt like aſhes.* 17. *He caſteth forth his ice like morſels: who can ſtand before his cold?* 18. *He ſendeth out his word, and melteth them: he cauſeth his wind to blow,* and *the waters flow.*

The wonders of nature repreſent to us the miracles of grace, and the change of ſeaſons produceth not greater alterations in the world, than thoſe which take place in the church, when her God hideth from her, or reſtoreth to her, the light of his countenance, which, like it's emblem, the bright ruler in the heavens, at it's departure leaves winter behind it; and brings the ſpring with it at it's return. "The ſun," ſays Biſhop Sherlock, "is the great ſpirit of the "world, in the light of which all things are made to "rejoice; perpetual ſpring attends his courſe; all "things revive at his approach, and put on a new "face of youth and beauty; winter and froſt lag "behind him; nature grows deformed, and ſickens "at his departure." Diſc. Vol. v. P. 88. What the ſun is to the world, the ſame is Chriſt to the church. When the heart of man turns away from him, and deprives itſelf of his gracious illumination; when ignorance ſucceeds to knowledge, that is, darkneſs to light; when faith fails, and all it's fair productions whither away; when "the love of many is "waxen cold," and the fertilizing ſtreams of charity are frozen to the bottom; On the other hand, when God

God "ſendeth out his WORD, and melteth them;" when he "bloweth with his SPIRIT, and," by theſe genial influences from above, "the waters are made "to flow;" when faith revives, and ſhoots into vigour, and beauty, and fruitfulneſs; and when the hearts of men are warmed, as well as their underſtandings illuminated; what is all this, but a winter, and a ſpring, like thoſe which, in their turns, annually deform and renew the face of the earth, at the "word and command of God," in either caſe, "running "ſwiftly," and operating efficaciouſly.

19. *He ſheweth his word unto Jacob, his ſtatutes and his judgments unto Iſrael.* 20. *He hath not dealt ſo with any nation: and* as for his *judgments, they have not known them. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

That "word," the effects of which upon the ſpiritual ſyſtem are ſimilar to thoſe experienced by nature in the vernal ſeaſon, that "word was ſhewed "unto Jacob," and became the property of Iſrael," while Iſrael continued to be the church of God. It hath ſince been made over, with all it's types realized, and it's prophecies accompliſhed in Jeſus, to the church Chriſtian; it is that peculiar bleſſing, which diſtinguiſhes her from the reſt of the world, and for which her children are bound, at all times, to "praiſe "the LORD."

PSALM CXLVIII.

ARGUMENT.

All the creatures in the inviſible and viſible world are called upon by the Pſalmiſt to unite in a grand chorus of praiſe and thankſgiving. The various parts are to be performed by 1, 2. the angelic hoſts: 3—6. the material heavens, and the luminaries placed in them; 7. the ocean, with it's inhabitants; 8. the meteors of the air, 9, 10. the earth, as divided into hills and vallies, with the vegetables that grow out of it, and the animals that move upon, or about it; 11—13. the human race of every degree, of each ſex, and of every age; 14. more eſpecially the Iſrael, or church of God.

1. *Praiſe ye the* LORD. *Praiſe ye the* LORD *from the heavens: praiſe him in the heights.* 2. *Praiſe ye him all ye angels, praiſe ye him, all his hoſts.*

When St. John ſaw in viſion the King of glory ſeated on his throne, he tells us that he heard all the angels which ſtood around the throne, with the elders, and every creature in heaven, earth, and ſea, lifting up their voices, and ſinging together a hymn of thankſgiving in honour of him. Such a choir we find here ſummoned by the inſpired Pſalmiſt, and exhorted to join and aſſiſt him in praiſing the ſame

divine

divine perſon, whom the elders, in the Revelation, declare "worthy to receive glory, and honour, and "power," becauſe he "created all things, and for "his pleaſure they are, and were created." Rev. v. 13. iv. ii. From the heavens and thoſe unutterable heights, where hoſts of immortal ſpirits, admitted to a ſight of their King, enjoy unfading pleaſures, the ſong is to begin. And when the ſtrain is thus ſet by the celeſtial part of the choir, it is to be taken up, and echoed back, by the creatures of this lower world, animate and inanimate, which have all their ſeveral parts aſſigned them, in the great works of glorifying their Creator.

3. *Praiſe ye him ſun and moon: praiſe him, all ye ſtars of light.* 4. *Praiſe him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that* be *above the heavens.* 5. *Let them praiſe the name of the* LORD: *for he commanded, and they were created.* 6. *He hath alſo ſtabliſhed them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which ſhall not paſs.*

The material heavens, through all their various regions, with the luminaries placed in them, and the waters ſuſtained by them, though they have neither ſpeech nor language, and want the tongue of men, yet, by their ſplendor and magnificence, their motions and their influences, all regulated and exerted according to the ordinance of their Maker, do, in a very intelligible and ſtriking manner, declare the glory of God: they call upon us to tranſlate their actions into our language, and copy their obedience in our lives; that ſo we may, both by word and deed, glorify, with them, the Creator and Redeemer of the univerſe.

7. *Praiſe the* Lord *from the earth, ye dragons*, or, *whales, and all deeps:*

From heaven above, the Pſalmiſt deſcendeth to the deep beneath, which, while it proclaims the power, obſerves the laws and decrees of him who made it, and poured it abroad. And the ſame may be ſaid of it's enormous inhabitants, which are under the command of Jehovah, and of none but him.

8. *Fire, and hail; ſnow, and vapour; ſtormy wind fulfilling his word:*

Theſe are ſo many meſſengers, always ready to go forth, at the command of the moſt High, for the purpoſes of mercy, or judgment. They praiſe and glorify God, after their manner, while they "fulfil "his word" upon the earth.

9. *Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:* 10. *Beaſts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:*

Who ſhall ever underſtand and comprehend all the wiſdom of God diſplayed in the vegetable world, from the cedar to the hyſſop; in the animal, from the elephant to the piſmire, from the eagle to the ſparrow! The more we ſtudy them, the more we ſhall find him glorified in them; and the more, on that account, will he be glorified by us.

11. *Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:* 12. *Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:* 13. *Let them praiſe the name of the* Lord: *for his name alone is excellent; his glory* is *above the earth and heaven.**

* Nec ad ſolos Hebræos hæc pertinet adhortatio, ſed ad omnes omnino homines: eſtque adeo veluti proludium vocationis Gentilium.

After the whole creation hath been called upon to praiſe Jehovah; man, for whom the whole was made; man, the laſt and moſt perfect work of God; man, that hath been ſince redeemed by the blood of the Son of God incarnate, is exhorted to join and fill up the univerſal chorus of heaven and earth, as being connected with both worlds, that which now is, and that which is to come. Perſons of every degree, of each ſex, and of every age; "kings," whoſe power God hath made an image of his own, and who are the ſuns of their reſpective ſyſtems; "judges," and magiſtrates of all kinds, who derive their power, as the moon and planets do their light, from it's original ſource; "young men and maidens," in the flower of health, ſtrength, and beauty; "old men," who have accompliſhed their warfare, and are going out of life; "children," who are juſt come into it, and ſee every thing new before them; all theſe have their ſeveral reaſons for "praiſing the Lord, whoſe "name is excellent, and his glory above heaven and "earth."

14. *He alſo exalteth the horn of his people, the praiſe of all his ſaints,* even *of the children of Iſrael, a people near unto him. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

As men above all other creatures, ſo, above other men, the "Iſrael" of God, the "people" that are admitted to draw "near unto him," in his houſe, by faith and charity, by prayer and participation of the

Gentilium. Deum enim laudare, ut par eſt, non poſſunt, qui eum non bene norunt; nec eum ſatis norunt, qui Evangelium nunquam audiverunt; e quo maximæ Dei laudes effloreſcunt. CLERICUS in loc.

ſacra-

ſacraments, are bound to praiſe him, who now "ex-"alteth" them from ſin to righteouſneſs, and will hereafter exalt them from duſt to glory.

Since few of my readers may, perhaps, have met with a paraphraſe on the foregoing Pſalm, that has hitherto, I believe, only made it's appearance in a periodical publication, or two, I ſhall take the liberty to ſubjoin it, as a piece, which cannot but be acceptable to all true lovers of ſacred poetry. It was written, as I have been lately informed, by the learned and ingenious Dr. OGILVIE, at ſixteen years of age.

PSALM CXLVIII.

I.

BEGIN, my ſoul, th' exalted lay,
Let each enraptur'd thought obey,
And praiſe th' Almighty's name.
Lo! heaven and earth, and ſeas and ſkies,
In one melodious concert riſe,
To ſwell th' inſpiring theme.

II.

Ye fields of light, celeſtial plains,
Where gay tranſporting beauty reigns,
Ye ſcenes divinely fair;
Your Maker's wond'rous power proclaim,
Tell how he form'd your ſhining frame,
And breath'd the fluid air.

III.

Ye angels, catch the thrilling ſound;
While all th' adoring thrones around

His

His boundleſs mercy ſing;
Let ev'ry liſt'ning ſaint above
Wake all the tuneful ſoul of love,
And touch the ſweeteſt ſtring.

IV.

Join, ye loud ſpheres, the vocal choir;
Thou, dazzling orb of liquid fire,
The mighty chorus aid:
Soon as grey ev'ning gilds the plain,
Thou, moon, protract the melting ſtrain,
And praiſe him in the ſhade.

V.

Thou, heav'n of heav'ns, his vaſt abode;
Ye clouds, proclaim your forming God,
Who call'd yon worlds from night;
"Ye ſhades, diſpel!"—th' Eternal ſaid;
At once th' involving darkneſs fled,
And nature ſprung to light.

VI.

Whate'er a blooming world contains,
That wings the air, that ſkims the plains,
United praiſe beſtow:
Ye dragons, ſound his awful name
To heav'n aloud; and roar acclaim,
Ye ſwelling deeps below.

VII.

Let every element rejoice:
Ye thunders, burſt with awful voice

To

To him who bids you roll:
His praiſe in ſofter notes declare,
Each whiſpering breeze of yielding air,
And breathe it to the ſoul.

VIII.

To him, ye graceful cedars, bow;
Ye tow'ring mountains, bending low,
Your great Creator own;
Tell, when affrighted nature ſhook,
How *Sinai* kindled at his look,
And trembled at his frown.

IX.

Ye flocks that haunt the humble vale,
Ye inſects flutt'ring on the gale,
In mutual concourſe riſe;
Crop the gay roſe's vermeil bloom,
And waft it's ſpoils, a ſweet perfume,
In incenſe to the ſkies.

X.

Wake, all ye mounting tribes, and ſing;
Ye plumy warblers of the ſpring,
Harmonious anthems raiſe
To him who ſhap'd your finer mould,
Who tipp'd your glittering wings with gold,
And tun'd your voice to praiſe.

XI.

Let man, by nobler paſſions ſway'd,
The feeling heart, the judging head

In

In heavenly praiſe employ;
Spread his tremendous name around,
Till heaven's broad arch rings back the ſound,
The gen'ral burſt of joy.

XII.

Ye, whom the charms of grandeur pleaſe,
Nurs'd on the downy lap of eaſe,
Fall proſtrate at this throne;
Ye princes, rulers, all adore;
Praiſe him, ye kings, who makes your power
An image of his own.

XIII.

Ye fair, by nature form'd to move,
O praiſe th' eternal ſource of love,
With youth's enlivening fire:
Let age take up the tuneful lay,
Sigh his bleſs'd name—then ſoar away,
And aſk an angel's lyre.

PSALM CXLIX.

ARGUMENT.

The children of Zion are excited 1—3. to rejoice, and ſing the praiſes of their King, on account 4. of the ſalvation which he has already wrought for them, and which will hereafter be compleated in them, when 5. they ſhall enter into his Reſt, and 6—9. triumph with him over the perſecuting powers

powers of the world, and all the oppoſers of Chriſt, on whom will then be executed the judgment written. The Jews, miſtaking, as uſual, the time, place, and nature of Meſſiah's glorious kingdom, imagine this Pſalm will receive it's accompliſhment, by their being made rulers of the nations, and lords of all things here below.

1. *Praiſe the* LORD: *Sing unto the* LORD *a new ſong, and his praiſe in the congregation of ſaints.* 2. *Let Iſrael rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.* 3. *Let them praiſe his name in the dance: let them ſing praiſes unto him with the timbrel and harp.*

Chriſtians are now the people, to whom belong the names and characters of "ſaints, Iſrael, and chil-"dren of Zion." They "ſing" this holy "ſong," as the Pſalmiſt hath enjoined them to do. They ſing it "new" in it's evangelical ſenſe, as new men, celebrating new victories, new and greater mercies, a ſpiritual ſalvation, an eternal redemption. They "rejoice" with hearts, voices, inſtruments, and every other token of joy, "in him who hath made," or created them again, in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; they are "joyful in their King," who hath himſelf overcome, and is now leading them on to final conqueſt and triumph, to honour and immortality.

4. *For the* LORD *taketh pleaſure in his people: he will beautify the meek with ſalvation.* 5. *The ſaints*

ſaints ſhall be joyful with glory: they ſhall ſing aloud upon their beds*, or, *places of reſt*.

Such "pleaſure" the King of Zion taketh in his people, that he hath not diſdained to become like one of them; to partake of their fleſh and blood, and to give them his Spirit; he was made man, to purchaſe them by his death; and, as a man, he is gone into heaven, to prepare a place for them. From thence he will return, to "beautify the meek with "ſalvation," and place on the heads of his true diſciples, the lowly, patient, and peaceable ones, a bright and incorruptible crown. Therefore are "the "ſaints joyful in glory; they ſing aloud," in a ſtate of perfect eaſe and ſecurity, reſting from their labours, but not from their hallelujahs.

6. *The high* praiſes *of God in their mouth, and a two edged ſword in their hand*; 7. *To execute vengeance upon the heathen*, and *puniſhments upon the people*; 8. *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron*; 9. *To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his ſaints. Praiſe ye the* LORD.

To thoſe, who are SAINTS indeed, and who are acquainted with the genuine ſpirit of the Goſpel, how obvious is it, that the ſcene, of which we have here a prophetical exhibition, is one that cannot take place, till after the reſurrection, becauſe the followers of the Lamb have certainly nothing to do with vengeance in this world, though they are to judge,

* In this verſe, the Hebrew verbs are in the future time. In the verſe following, the original hath no verb at all. The liberty is therefore taken to render them accordingly.

not

not only men, but angels, in the next; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. when they ſhall be called up to ſit on thrones, as aſſeſſors, at the condemnation of their once inſulting perſecutors, who will be cut aſunder with the "two edged ſword," and bound with indiſſoluble "chains." Thus will be executed upon them the "eternal judgment written" and announced againſt the enemies of Meſſiah, in the Scriptures of truth. "This honour will all his ſaints THEN have."

PSALM CL.

ARGUMENT.

The Pſalmiſt exhorteth men to praiſe Jehovah, 1. for his holineſs, and the firmament of his power, 2. for the wonders of his might, and for his excellent greatneſs, 3—5. with all kinds of muſic. 6. He concludeth his divine book of praiſes, by calling upon every thing that hath breath, to employ that breath in declaring the glory of him who gave it.

1. *Praiſe ye the* LORD. *Praiſe God in his ſanctuary*, or, *for his holineſs*; *praiſe him in*, or, *for the firmament*; or, *expanſion of his power.*

If our tranſlation be retained, the meaning is, that God ſhould be praiſed in the "ſanctuary," or temple, below, and likewiſe in "heaven" above; the former being planned and conſtructed, as a reſemblance of the latter. But the context rather perhaps requires us to ſuppoſe the Pſalmiſt giving the reaſons why God

God ſhould be praiſed; namely, on account of his "holineſs," and of his "power;" which power is more eſpecially diſplayed in the formation of the "firmament," or "expanſion" of the material heavens, and their inceſſant operations, by means of the light, and the air, of which they are compoſed, upon the earth, and all things therein. Theſe are the appointed inſtruments of life and motion in the natural world, and they afford us ſome idea of that power of God unto ſalvation, which is manifeſted in the church, by the effects produced on the ſouls of men, through the gracious influences of the LIGHT divine, and the SPIRIT of holineſs, conſtituting the "firmament of God's power," in the new creation.

2. *Praiſe him for his mighty acts: praiſe him according to his excellent greatneſs.*

"Mighty" were the "acts" which God wrought for Iſrael, and "great" was the Holy One in the midſt of his ancient people; but far mightier acts did he perform in Chriſt Jeſus, for the redemption of the world; and more "excellent greatneſs" hath he manifeſted in the converſion of the nations, the overthrow of paganiſm, and the erection and preſervation of the Chriſtian Church. O that her gratitude bore ſome proportion to his goodneſs!

3. *Praiſe him with the ſound of the trumpet; praiſe him with the pſaltery and harp.* 4. *Praiſe him with the timbrel and dance: praiſe him with ſtringed inſtruments and organs.* 5. *Praiſe him upon the loud cymbals: praiſe him upon the high ſounding cymbals.*

It is impoſſible for us to diſtinguiſh and deſcribe the ſeveral ſorts of muſical inſtruments here mention-

ed, as the Hebrews themſelves acknowledge their ignorance in this particular. Thus much is clear, that the people of God are enjoined to uſe all the various kinds of them, in the performance of their divine ſervices. And why ſhould they not be ſo uſed, under the Goſpel? We read of ſacred muſic before the law, in the inſtance of "Miriam, the propheteſs, "the ſiſter of Aaron," who, to celebrate the deliverance from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, "took a tim-"brel in her hand, and the women went out after "her, with timbrels and dances." Exod. xv. 20. The cuſtom, therefore, was not introduced by the law, nor aboliſhed with it. Well regulated muſic, if ever it had the power of calming the paſſions, if ever it enlivened and exalted the affections of men in the worſhip of God, (purpoſes for which it was formerly employed) doubtleſs hath ſtill the ſame power, and can ſtill afford the ſame aids to devotion. When the beloved diſciple was, in ſpirit, admitted into the celeſtial choir, he not only heard them "ſinging" hymns of praiſe, but he heard likewiſe "the voice of "harpers harping upon their harps." Rev. xiv. 2. And why that, which ſaints are repreſented as doing in heaven, ſhould not be done, according to their ſkill and ability, by ſaints upon earth; or why inſtrumental muſic ſhould be aboliſhed as a legal ceremony, and vocal muſic, which was as much ſo, ſhould be retained, no good reaſon can be aſſigned. Sacred muſic, under proper regulations, removes the hindrances of our devotion, cures the diſtractions of our thoughts, and baniſhes wearineſs from our minds. It adds ſolemnity to the public ſervice, raiſes

all

all the devout paſſions in the ſoul, and cauſes our duty to become our delight. "Of the pleaſures of "heaven," ſays the eloquent and elegant Biſhop Atterbury, "nothing further is revealed to us, than "that they conſiſt in the practice of Holy Muſic, "and Holy Love; the joint enjoyment of which, "we are told, is to be the happy lot of all pious "ſouls, to endleſs ages." It may be added, that there is no better method of combating the miſchievous effects flowing from the abuſe of muſic, than by applying it to it's true and proper uſe. If the worſhippers of Baal join in a chorus to celebrate the praiſes of their idol, the ſervants of Jehovah ſhould drown it, by one that is ſtronger and more powerful, in praiſe of him who made heaven and earth. If the men of the world rejoice in the object of their adoration, let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.

6. *Let every thing that hath breath praiſe the* LORD. *Praiſe ye the* LORD.

The breath of natural life, which God hath breathed into our noſtrils, and the breath of that new and eternal life, which he hath given us through Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, ſhould be returned in hallelujahs. And then the church, compoſed of many and different members, all actuated, like the pipes of a well-tuned organ, by the ſame Spirit, and conſpiring together in perfect harmony, would become one great inſtrument, ſounding forth the praiſes of God moſt high.

LET EVERY THING THAT HATH BREATH PRAISE THE LORD!—With this wiſh the ſweet Pſalmiſt of

Iſrael cloſes the ſongs of Sion. With the ſame wiſh the author deſires to cloſe theſe meditations upon them; giving thanks to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts, by whoſe moſt gracious favour and aid they have been begun, continued and ended; and humbly praying, that no errors, or improprieties, from which, through human infirmity, during the courſe of a long work, the moſt diligent and careful are not exempt, may prevent his labours from contributing, in ſome ſmall degree, to promote the improvement and conſolation of the redeemed, the honour and glory of the Redeemer, who IS THE ROOT AND THE OFFSPRING OF DAVID, AND THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.* AMEN.

* Rev. xxii. 16.

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THE END.